

The MYSTERY OF ELEMENT 117 by Milton K. Smith

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STORIES

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1949



MOON OF BATTLE

By J. J. ALLERTON

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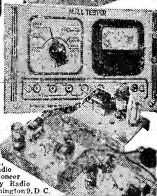
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 When the most ferocious lion in Hollywood drank this elixir, he became like a lamb — but somehow playful lions still look as though they intended to eat you!

Cover painting by Robert Gibson Jones, illustrating
 a scene from "Moon Of Battle"

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The

OBSERVATORY

..... by the Editor

ELEVEN years, seven months, one week and two hours ago your editor sat down at this typewriter and wrote his first editorial word as editor of *Amazing Stories*. Now he is seated at the same typewriter, writing his last.

It's been a long time, and an extremely happy one. In those years he has learned a lot. Perhaps it might be interesting, rather than just muttering the usual farewells, for this resigning editor to tell you some of the things he has learned. At least, it will be unusual. As a general rule, editors don't tell what they know—for fear someone will get their jobs. But in this case, the editor is giving up the job so that he can strike out for himself. In other words, no farewells, because you'll all be seeing a lot of this editor in the future, as *publisher* and editor.

One of the first things we learned was that science fiction readers are an extremely loyal lot. *Amazing Stories* in 1938 was a mess! Circulation was only 27,000. The magazine was a dead duck. We believe it was our friends who revived it—our friends who had read our stories before we became editor. Anyway, the circulation was 45,000 on the first issue we edited, and we felt mighty proud of those 17,000 added friends who backed our editing up. Later we added 100,000 other friends, and it's been that way for long years. So we feel "successful" about the whole thing.

Next thing we learned was that there were two kinds of authors; the kind who write science fiction because they love it, and the kind who write because they love money. We had a very hard time distinguishing between the two, because we felt nobody'd write science fiction who didn't love it. And we've concluded as a result of some of those manuscripts, the friendships that ensued, and the friendships that "expired" with smaller post-war checks, that the fellow who brings up the question of "rates" before he brings up the manuscript ought to write mystery thrillers, and he is.

Another thing we learned is that science fiction grows on its editor, its readers, its authors. It grows in two ways: in his heart, and in his head. In his heart it makes a monkey out of him because non-science fiction people just don't

understand him, and they ridicule him. Just as they did with flying saucers. And things like that hurt, until you consider the source. In his head it assumes gigantic proportions, because he realizes that he is really making the world of the future, by pointing the way. He is more than a prophet, he is fate itself! And that's a mighty nice feeling! But you can't let it pass you up; you've got to keep a jump ahead of it. So, new ideas are absolutely necessary. And that isn't easy. It takes every brain cell you've got—to keep ahead of scientists with loads of gray matter, ahead of progress, which rides mighty fast machines, and ahead of your readers, who have imagination or they wouldn't read *Amazing Stories*.

Some of those ideas aren't so good. Others are terrific. And all of them get opposition from everybody but the readers. It's a funny thing, but an editor has to fight everybody! He even has to fight the printers. We even had a printer's proofreader who questioned a whole story—asked if we really meant that. He thought it ought to be toned down. He objected that we should know that this was "impossible" and that it just "didn't exist". He was talking about the atom bomb...

Another thing we learned is that all magazines tend to get into a rut. They reach a high circulation and the idea then becomes to safeguard that circulation. And the cautious circulation manager, or the editor who keeps one eye cocked on his salary and his future "security"—as if such a thing existed—patterns his future issues after the successful ones. Then he worries when sales begin a slow decline. He should be worrying about his guts.

A great many of our friends are worrying about this editor, and how he'll eat after he quits this job, and what he'll do. They point out that he's been with *Amazing Stories* for nearly twelve years, and you just don't quit a job that pays that much money. Well, how about it, readers? Haven't we been all over the Universe together? Haven't we faced the incredible dangers of Mars, of Venus, of extra-galactic invaders, of monsters from the fourth dimension, of atom wars, of evolution run wild, of sadistic villains, of

(CONCLUDED ON PAGE 161)

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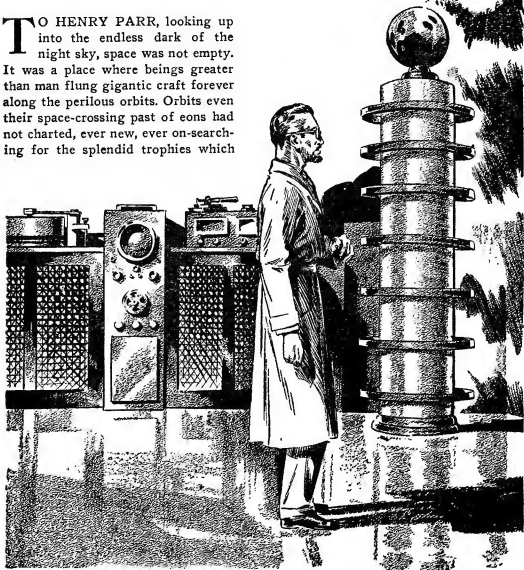
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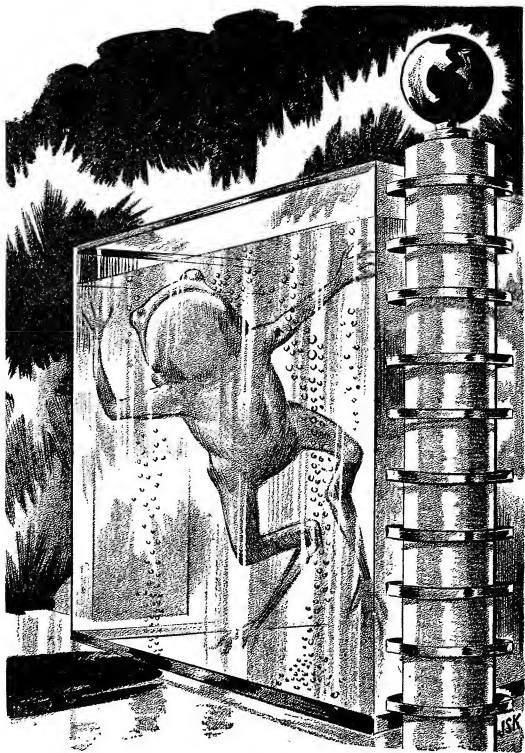
By Stan Raycraft

Parr found beauty and adventure when he stepped through Rovpal's translator. But the Quanes found the key to the gateway, too!

TO HENRY PARR, looking up into the endless dark of the night sky, space was not empty. It was a place where beings greater than man flung gigantic craft forever along the perilous orbits. Orbits even their space-crossing past of eons had not charted, ever new, ever on-searching for the splendid trophies which



Henry expanded a frog—and it grew until it became gaseous in volume



awaited the pioneer in untraveled new regions.

He saw in the night sky a spreading, fecund, gigantic growth reaching ever wider across the sweet black face of night. He saw beings greater than men choosing for homes the planets around which strange energies made life a leaping flame of vitality.

He saw courageous beings seeking, and finding, those pearls of space—planets more fit for living than men can imagine. And his eyes would return to earth pondering on the possibility of space travel and realize discouraging truth—man was a creature who spent his greatest effort creating the atom bomb.

Henry Parr had a fine scientific mind. He was a good height for a man, five ten, and well muscled, slender and supple of waist, quick and alert. His hair was brown and wavy, his eyes a keen blue, his features attractive if not impressive. The real Henry Parr was a deep pondering soul within that fine mind.

Henry started pondering on the simple phenomena of *change of state*. You know how ice, water and steam are three states of the same primal substance. They change because of three different energy levels. Heat, simple old fashioned heat, causes this miraculous change.

Henry became a kind of collector. He collected *changes of state*. After some years he knew a great deal about how to cause various changes of state in various kinds of matter by the application of variant forms of energy.

After all this time, Henry changed from the collecting stage to the experimental stage. Energy had been applied, but Henry wasn't thinking about himself, not directly.

He could change almost anything from a solid to a gas, or back, or to a liquid. And some things, amorphous

things, aroused a great deal of Henry's plentiful curiosity.

For instance, you can freeze life, such as a frog—it's a change of state in living matter. And if you're careful the frog will live through it. But you can't change the frog to a gas... Nor to a liquid. Cells in living matter were too apt to be killed by the structural changes.

Somehow, in Henry Parr's mind, the two ideas of change of state and of *space travel* became strangely inter-related. His mind enjoyed contemplating both, and it did.

So was born the idea.

From the idea was born the deed. Henry applied a certain energy of his own concoction to the poor frog (frogs were handy) and the frog slowly became a gas-frog. But it didn't die! It wiggled, kicked out with its gaseous feet, swam slowly upward, spreading wider and less and less dense—until it was visible no more. Henry labled his notes on that one "inconclusive". Because the frog became invisible after a bit you couldn't be sure it died or not.

Henry repeated, within a closed chamber. The frog swam about in a gaseous state, and failed to die. Henry increased the pressure, the gaseous frog slowly shrank, and quite suddenly became a normal frog again! It was alive! Which after all was no more miraculous than thawing out a *frozen* frog and seeing it come to life again. Not to Henry Parr, it wasn't, not any more.

Henry repeated. Same result. Henry enlarged his apparatus, his chamber, bought bigger pumps, newer and better dynamos. Henry spent all his money getting ready, which wasn't too much for what Henry had in mind.

Henry expanded a dog, a warm blooded creature. It survived. Henry spent a solid year making sure, check-

ing and rechecking, trying creature after creature...and at last he could resist no longer.

HENRY floated within the chamber of heavy glass. A time mechanism was set to start the pressure, both electro-static and atmospheric—in just fifteen minutes. There should be no risk after his exhaustive repetitions and continued success with each experiment.

But there was a risk! Bette came in, looking for him to play tennis. Henry was not present. He should be, she knew he was always there at four o'clock in the afternoon. She looked around. Inadvertently she pushed a little lever with her elbow, and the heavy glass lid of Henry's man-size chamber began to lift.

Bette screamed at what came out, kicking and opening-and-shutting its mouth. Henry was only trying to tell her what to do! She wasn't hearing, not Bette. She was seeing ghosts!

She ran out and left the lab door open. A gust of fall wind blew poor Henry Parr out into the garden. Slowly at first, he drifted up, up, up!

It was no use struggling, he couldn't swim *down*. Not when his body was expanding more and more rapidly each second that passed. There was a lot that Henry didn't know yet about this change of state in living matter. One of those things was *where* the expansion stopped and *did* one live after *great* expansion took place?

He could still see dimly the round, green-and-white-and-brown of the earth below. For a while. Then it disappeared. Henry guessed his retinas were too diffuse now to stop a ray of light. Or he was too far up to see anything at all.

Mainly, he noticed he was numb. He couldn't feel. Not pain, nor air on him, nor feel he was alive at all. Just

numb and dead and drifting. Time passed, and Henry drifted in a numb, unseeing waiting. Henry Parr was in space, where he had dreamed of going, someday when he was ready. But Bette Halloran had taken care of that...before he was ready.

* * *

WHEN the light pressure hit him, he felt like a spider caught over a bonfire. He woke up! He knew he was alive, *pain* filled him. He could see only great luminous blobs of stuff rushing past him—striking him, splashing around him. Stuff that burned, at first. Then he warmed up, and it was pleasant, like light. It was light!

Henry rushed along with the light, like the same spider caught over a bonfire and his web blasted aloft by the heat, himself clinging to it. The thread of web was his life, he knew, and he clung to it with all his will. After a time the luminous stuff didn't rush past, he was traveling along with it.

Going places, Henry Parr. But he hadn't planned it just this way, not at all!

Light travels a long long way before it stops. So did Henry Parr. He had an idea how far and fast, too. He knew Roemer had measured light speed as 186,000 miles a second, way back in 1675. He knew they hadn't improved his figures much since, either.

The fact that the distance between himself and Bette Halloran was increasing at exactly the speed of light did nothing to make Henry accept his fate philosophically.

It was about that time that Henry caught up with the frog. He recognized *that* frog. It looked a little hazy on the edges but it was the same old one-eyed frog he had allowed to to get away when his first experiment succeeded too well. Henry reasoned

he must have traveled faster because he had more area spread out to catch the light pressure, like a bigger sail. His weight didn't count, he knew, because there wasn't any to speak of where there was no planet. He also deduced that he had about reached the limit of the sun's light, and as he tried to compute just how far from home and Bette Halloran's arms that was, he got a splitting headache. It was too close to infinity's edge to bother about the fractions.

It was just about then that Henry's head bobbed *above the surface*, and the first thing he saw was friend frog swimming like—like a frog *for the shore*.

By now Henry's deductive faculties were getting a bit radical and frayed, but he deduced that the edge of the light pressure of the sun caused a sphere which was relatively to himself as the surface of water would be if he was swimming. Accepting this relative impossibility with one gulp, and spitting out the very apparent palpability of the water that *wasn't* water but light-pressure—Henry began to paddle toward shore with much the same stroke the frog was using.

Standing up, he examined himself for defects, shook the "aqua" out of his eyes, ran his fingers through his hair. Trees drooped overhead, he would have sworn they were weeping willows!

Not only that, there was a little heart carved in the trunk of the nearest one, and this path was familiar! If the initials there were familiar—but they weren't. They were no initials he had ever seen. They weren't his own! They couldn't be! He was having aberrations, seeing visions of home. They were distinctly *not* B.H. & H. P. Nobody would be expected to travel that far without seeing things when he arrived—things that *couldn't*

be there.

But a faint suspicion of something too, too familiar led his feet along that path. He saw, presently a lone figure in skirt and sweater, dangling a tennis racket rebelliously over the old rail fence around Brown's pasture. But it couldn't be her, he knew better.

He followed along the familiar path and up *his own stone-paved walk!* He opened the old stained door, began to strip off the wet shirt as he made for the bathroom!

But curiosity overcame him as he passed his own lab door, for he heard a sound within. With trembling fingers he pressed the latch, peered within.

THERE was a familiar row of powerful dynamos, a great sonic reflector, and a wide wire-webbed focussing device of his own manufacture. There was a huge glass-enclosed air chamber, big enough to hold a man.

There was a pale, anaemic looking male, about his own size and build, in his own laboratory—fooling with his own apparatus!

This was too much! No one had any right in here but himself!

Henry Parr rushed in to confront Henry Parr just as Henry Parr closed the chamber door from the inside and pressed the lever that engaged the switch outside and directed the vibrant expansive power of his own especial cell-gaseator down upon his own head. Futilely Henry yelled "Don't, man, don't! I've been through it all and I can tell you, don't!"

It was just then that Bette came in, swinging her tennis racket and yelling impatiently:

"I've been waiting over by the tennis court for one solid hour, Henry Parr. Can't you ever remember anything?"

She didn't see him at first, where

he stood in the shadows by the door where he had stopped to watch the trespasser in his laboratory monkeying with his apparatus to see what he was doing.

With a flash of inspiration Henry Parr leaped to save the man. But...

Bette leaned her elbow on the big glass case, releasing the spring opening device which was his own invention. The wide glass door swung up and out—and out and up Henry saw Henry drift, his mouth open gaspingly—but no sounds coming from that ghostly shadow of a man.

Swinging around, still unconscious of that which she had inadvertently done to Henry Parr, Bette Halloran noticed the big ghostly, half-palpable shadow pass over her head.

She screamed, ran toward the door, plump into Henry Parr's arms. He held her tight, and it felt like...like...home and heaven!

"Well, can you beat that?" said Henry Parr, picking up his tennis racket.

"This is the scariest darned place," laughed Bette, as she renewed her lipstick. "Let's go out in the sun."

"Yes, dear, let's...go out in the sun, by all means, the sunlight is very good for us!"

"Corny?" That's what Henry Parr thought, looking around. "What a corny ending for his great adventure!"

Far above, Henry Parr II floated up into the blast of the sun-light, began his journey toward—the rim of infinity.

BUT AFTER a few days Henry Parr I began to add a few things together and get some funny answers. Everything was not precisely the same as it had been before. For instance, Bette's name wasn't Bette Halloran. It was Bettina Hall! And when his mail arrived, it wasn't ad-

dressed to Henry Parr. It was addressed to Hendrick Parkar. Apparently his ancestry had been somewhat different here.

Apprehensively Henry Parr I began to watch for these subtle but all-important variances from the world he had known. He took up the study of the stars seriously, but here he was lost, he didn't know enough about the constellations as they had been to be absolutely sure they were changed. But a few of them certainly looked unfamiliar. However they always had—looked strange and attractively remote.

He began to speculate on what the next "up" step would be, and if the little differences would get to be big differences if he kept on going up and up.

Too, he found that Bettina had not all the same character his own Bette had had.

Bette, while she had sometimes been impatient, had always been faithful. Now, Bettina, while she seemed fond of him, had nothing but scorn for his experimental research, and begrudged him every minute spent in his laboratory. And Henry spent a great deal of time there, checking on the little differences. For instance, the air, instead of containing familiar oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen, had a couple of other gases in large amounts and the carbon dioxide was considerably less in amount.

When he picked up an ancient history book one day, he was dumfounded. The Egyptians were Cryptians and the pyramids were round smooth cones, surmounted by squatting and quite lewd Goddesses. The Greeks were Cretes and the Cretans were Greeks, and the things they worshipped and the orgies they went through were quite luridly and frankly described... Henry spent a weird

week catching up on his ancient History and emerged with a vast sense of confusion.

It was after this session with the history books that he found Bettina had given him up as a poor investment and was blissfully planning a marriage with some wight named Harry Parnell. Henry had known a Larry Darnell "back home" but he had never shown the slightest interest in anything but whiskey, and no decent girl would be seen with him. This fellow was a busienss man and owned three garages, among other assets such as a cleaning and dying plant.

It was that night, with a mingled sense of frustrated inferiority, and a pulsing throbbing heart that sent through his veins the lure of adventure that had started all this—that Henry Parr took off for space from his gaseator chamber—again.

It hurt even more this time, and time wasn't the same; it was later in the evening, and he didn't hit the sun-blast until much longer spent in floating out and up.

As he floated through the lab door Henry would have sworn he saw himself coming in the door, but that was just one of those hallucinations one reads about—like Flying Saucers. No one could have timed his advent that closely or could he?

HENRY spent pretty near the whole trip in deep thought. There wasn't much else to do for his vision was hazy. Box-in-a-box, bubble-in-a-bubble—that was the universe, eh? The stars made the pressure, the limits of light were relatively the same as surface tension on water—and then one bobbed up in an ocean—of plain water. Just a big bubble around a bubble around a bubble—and change of state was the key to passage through. Henry wondered if he could rig a pressure de-

vice to change his state to progressively more solid forms, and so sink back through the bubbles one by one—to—home! His breast, that big haze down there, hurt with the thought of home. He would never see the place again. Even Henry Parr knew that he could never generate such pressures with the relatively fragile matter forms up here. The steps were too far apart... or were they? He would have to think about it. Maybe he could do it with an integrative ray, something that made his body denser and denser—it wouldn't work. It had to get smaller and denser, and his apparatus would be futile in such small sizes—unless he made series of them to take up the job of compression—it wouldn't work. Henry gave up the thought of home. Forever.

He took over the thrilling picture of what might be if it were different, instead of repetitive, each upward step. Different, different entirely! One would think that it would take only a little variation along the line to produce a vast and absorbing difference in life somewhere...

Henry bobbed up out of the water and swam toward the beach. He dragged up on the sand, lay for a moment gathering his strength, and looked about for the ever present weeping willows. There weren't any weeping willows! It was night. Far off he saw a great whirling disc of light. About it were sprawled many lesser lights, making a fantastic pattern of incredible complexity.

Henry made his way with wonder in his heart toward the whirling lights, and now he heard sounds, cries, roars as of animals in pain.

Henry stopped under the wide spread arch of lights over the roadway. Automobiles were parked everywhere about. He passed on beneath the arch, to read a great banner—

"Barker's Wonder Park," He passed the ferris wheel and the man with the cart bellowed at him—"Get 'em while they're hot!"

Henry put down a quarter and went in to see Malecta, the Snake Charmer. She had a kind face...

ON THE outskirts of town, while Henry watched Malecta out-wriggle and out-squirm her own bull-snake, a vague shadow like a man floated up, up, out of sight in the darkness. After while Henry went home to the empty laboratory and took down the big bottle marked "Ethyl Alcohol".

But Betty Lou Harrigan was waiting for him and set it back on the shelf.

"None of that, Hank Parkinson! You've got a wedding to attend tomorrow."

Henry looked apologetic. "Honest, Bette, er I mean Betty-Lou, I'm sorry. I'm really not myself tonight. *Not myself at all.*"

"Well, let it worry you *not at all*. You'll do for little me, anyway." Betty-Lou was really quite nice. Almost as nice as Bette, at home. A man has to give up somewhere.

Hank Parkinson married Betty-Lou Hallan. And for awhile he was happy. But when a man has tasted space—real space—he can't leave it alone. Somewhere, he knew, there must be a wonder world where the air one breathed was not the same old tainted dusty used air—where man was greater than man, and where the awful thrill of super-human adventures went on—went on ture and experience beyond life's at a fiercely adventurous pace, where love was terrific and vivifying, where life was vastly more worth living than this day in and day out existence. Henry had it in his blood—Henry was going to get away from this world if

it killed him.

So, when one late afternoon he saw a wet bedraggled figure coming up the stone paved walk, he knew who it was. Like an automaton Henry Parr went into his lab, opened up the big dusty glass gaseator chamber, and pulled the release. And as Hendryk Van Park walked in, Henry Parr floated out over his head, swimming expertly in the vague air currents.

Somewhere there was a break in the chain, if he could find it.

There was! Much time had passed. The earth and the sun had both traveled. And as Henry blasted along on the fiery painful tide, he passed quite close to another sun, and found himself turning round and round, shooting off at a tangent to his usual direct course.

Again this happened, and he bounded off the heated blast of another fiery orb, found himself speeding along even faster and more confusingly than before.

When Henry came to this time, he was lying on soil, a blazing sun overhead.

No swimming to shore, no willow trees, no familiar path, no home-town subtly changed—no nothing but sun and parched rocks and shimmering hills far off.

In the sky another sun swung slowly over the horizon, visibly moving, and his shadow took on a double, a double that circled slowly as the sun moved higher.

Henry sat down to think, after an hour of plodding across a desert that showed no change. Two suns! That meant that he had bounced around within the spheres and somehow been shoved through a hole in intersecting spheres. Had flashed up into relative solidity with the sphere wall in another bubble. They must intersect, like a mass of soap bubbles. And at the intersections, there must be

places where a speeding gaseous form could pass through. He had done it! He had broken the chain of repetition. There were two suns. Other factors must be different, must have involved a planet with life of a variant form. He had to reach those hills, had to take a look over the far country and find whatever there was to find. This desert must not kill him until he knew—what this sphere of related densities was like.

The two suns swung on across the brass-burled sky, their paths crossed,—one sank, and then the second, making a blaze as of a million forest fires, touched the far horizon. Long floating islands of flame and molten bronze and royal purple and delicate fairy green spread across the wide sinking orb, spread along the whole horizon so that half the sky was infinite glory and even Parr's weary soul rose up and drank in the beauty and thrilled. Thrilled, and drank deep of some courageous magic, and heartened, and at last lay down at peace on this alien waste of sand and fell asleep.

IT WAS IN his sleep that Henry Parr first experienced the faint yet greatly penetrating contact of the *mind*.

"Sassani", the sands whispered. A slight wind stirred over the sand, and the sand whispered to some unseen being in the wind—"Sassani!" "Sassani," "sss..."

"Sassani," murmured Henry, in his sleep, and saw her, blue transparence of her flesh, like night, sprinkled through with little twinkling stars of meaning that were thoughts. Saw her, bent his knee before her, and touched the gown of blue might and faint twinkling lights that webbed away and up into mysterious reaches of other space—to that vast face of force-life that was her beauty and her

strength and her mind all in one.

The tingling electric ecstasy of that one contact, in his dreaming, woke him, and Henry sat up under those blazing alien stars and looked around. Awake, there was yet a soft breathing mystery about him. The sand still whispered too clearly the strange word of worship, and near at hand a little whirlpool of wind was dragging up the sand motes into a sparkling fountain, that whirled and whirled and frighteningly began to assume a shape. Henry watched, and the strange fear that comes from the un-understandable was at his throat as the whirl of wind passed and the eerie too-lovely woman-shape remained, standing there and looking down upon him.

It glided, limbless, lovely, serpentine, floating—toward him, and Henry crouched away—not in fear but in awe.

"I am Sassani, and my little selves have told me of you, stranger!" Hardly a voice, it was, but a sibilant essence of force, penetrating his bones with its vibrance, thrilling along his nerves with alien pleasant tinglings, telling his mind in phrases that had never needed words to be a meaning.

"Do you know who I am, and how I came here?" Henry tried to make his voice masculine, dominant, resonant—only succeeded in saying dull words.

"Of course I know, that is why I am here. I have come to guide you that you may live long enough to give us your knowledge. You have learned to travel the paths forbidden to most life, to all life that we know—we understand that. We must learn from you, and in return, you from us. Too, we need you to help fight our enemy. We need your knowledge very much, stranger!"

"Well, I'll be glad to help, but

you're expecting quite a bit of one who knows nothing of your world." It was exciting to think that this being who materialized out of a sand whirl could have a need for him. "Tell me, are you solid flesh like myself, and how do you do that trick of appearing out of the wind."

"I am not here! This is but a picture I have sent you, to guide you to myself!"

"Well, start guiding, Sassani. No-one was ever more willing to get started at something different. You'd be surprised how far I've traveled looking for you, Sassani!"

"I know..." Sassani's voice trailed off in a little amused titter, as she disappeared again. Henry got up, looking around. A black shadow lay on the sand before him, and at the end of it was a pointing narrow triangle. Henry knew this was the way to... Henry hoped that at last he had found life that was not just a repetition of the life he was too accustomed to already.

AT THE point of the shadow-triangle floated a glittering little blue veil, filled with the tiny points of light. This was Sassani, Henry knew, leading him toward life different and new.

As he plodded after, Sassani's sibilant, penetrating whisper told him things, intimately.

Presently the sand ended, they walked upon a roadway where the sand had apparently been fused into a pebbled glass of green-white, tough and yet springy underfoot. At the sides of the road were a few plants, strips of vivid yellow grass, and tall cactus-like plants thrust unfamiliar outlines. These increased in number, changed, and now the roadway began to slope upward into those far hills that seemed to Henry to have been his goal for endless hours.

The plants were taller now, and occasionally a tree thrust upward, tall columnar green trunk topped by an amazingly round ball of flaming orange, like the seed pod of a mould, or some puffball of gigantic size mounted on a huge stem.

As they ascended, Henry gathered in the details of this world of a different universe with but half of his attention—the rest was centered on the intensely exciting whispering that Sassani sent to him, exhorting, explaining, awaking him to a sense of kinship with these... beings.

"We are the remnants of a once numerous people. You will see us, and understand what we might have been, had not *the enemy* come to our world. This place to which I take you is one of the few strongholds which have held against the Quanes."

"What are these Quanes?" The intense hate in her whisper of the name gave Henry the creeps.

"The Quanes are men like you, Henry. And they slay us, they want us out of the way. They want to make a world like the one you left. Perhaps you had better go to them, after all. You are not like us."

"That's all I want to know, Sassani. I will go with you until I decide that the Quanes are my friends, and not you."

"It was our world, till *they* came."

But whatever Sassani's plans for Parr, he wasn't to learn them yet. Swooping down over them, planing in swift arcs over their heads—

"The Quanes," Sassani's strange whisper rose into a sudden shrill scream, and she disappeared from before him.

The swooping figures fishtailed, lit on strong human legs before him. They were men—and women—wearing metal wings that extended across their breast, a kind of miniature plane, with small jets in the center

of the wing, just beyond their extended arm's fingertips. They flew in a crouching position, the tail structure controlled by flexing the knees. The first to alight slipped his arms from the rings of the wing, folded the thing compactly, hung it on his back. He walked up to Henry—said:

"Mo duvall nu?"

Henry just looked at him. Deep-set piercing eyes, wide shoulders, slender waist, well-muscled, and bigger than himself. The athletic confidence the flyer exuded discouraged poor Henry. He was exactly like men of earth, except for minor details that amounted to quite a bit when Henry added them all up. He felt encouraged as he began to note these alien details, for what Henry was seeking most of all was escape from the circle of repetition that he had learned bounded his own universe. The man's ears were far too low to be exactly normal, and he turned his head too far, as though his neck was unlimited by bones and ligaments. There was a third joint between elbow and wrist, which gave an especially startling appearance. His legs likewise contained this extra jointing.

Behind the man a slighter figure lit on running feet, skidded to a halt almost against Henry's throbbing breast. She was young, and her dark hair in wild ringlets brushed Henry's face as she flung off the wings and tossed them over her shoulder to hang behind her. She stood on tip-toe to peer into Henry's grey eyes. She smiled, and spoke in rapid tumbling words to her companion. She pointed out Henry's fore-arm which lacked the proper jointing. She indicated Henry's ears. Henry flushed scarlet as she began to gesture rather too frankly as to the possible existence of further and more amazing discre-

pancies in his physical apparatus.

HE WAS now the center of a group of the Quanes, and they all talked volubly to each other while they pushed and prodded Henry's body and tried to ascertain the extent of his differences. When the girls started to disrobe him, he took to his heels, but was soon overhauled and brought low by a flying tackle from the first girl who had landed in front of him. Together they rolled on the yellow grass, she laughed with a great show of strong white teeth, and Henry found the contact thrilling but embarrassing.

After their first curiosity was satisfied they left him with the first male and the girl who had tackled him, spread their wings, the tiny jet motors hissed—they flew. His two captors plodded along beside Henry on foot. They did not follow the glass paved highway but cut across the now wooded and hilly country. Within two miles they came upon their camp.

There was a deep sense of loss in Henry's breast at the abrupt departure of the gentle ghostlike "picture" of his friend, Sassani. She had been so obviously well-intended, cultured, and she needed him, she said. It is a good thing to be needed. She had named these Quanes enemies. Henry could understand how these boastful flying people with their rude disregard of his own feelings, had antagonized the beings as of whom Sassani was one. He had a deep and firm conviction that he was going to find Sassani again, no matter how. To that end, Henry smiled at the mannish females of the strange people, took no notice of the stares and obviously uncomplimentary remarks which the males seemed to make about him. He tried to show that he

considered himself in friendly hands, even when a male knocked him down for stumbling against him, Henry rubbed his jaw and did nothing. Which was the source of great amusement to them all. But Henry knew quite well his earthly physique did not stand a chance against these aliens. Or so he thought.

Their camp was dominated by the presence of a large flying ship. They had evidently been there but a day or two, there were cooking fires, tents and guards in duty at a distance. Henry saw this was a military expedition. The men wore a uniform, each alike. So did the women. They were identical for both male and female. There was a short kilt, weapon belt, sleeveless jacket of leather-like material. The men wore peaked helmets caught by a strap under the chin, but the women wore a kind of beret. They were a vital, healthy lot, handsome enough if you didn't mind the alien details. But Sassani had told him they were evil, and Henry saw that in truth there was a cruel set to their lips, and a devil-take-you look in their eyes that was perhaps evil—and was perhaps only reckless courage. He reserved his judgment.

His coming seemed to bring to an end whatever had brought them there, they filed into the ship. The ship rose lightly, Henry was unable to figure out the motive power. He saw no motors, no jets, yet the ship rose and flew smoothly, silently. There was a round orifice beside his seat, he looked down upon an incredible landscape of great peaks, black chasms, and the yellow rim of the desert stretching endlessly. The ship followed the foothills of the mountains, finally entered a narrow canyon that slanted upward into the wild jumble of snowcapped Titans of black, sheer planes and clean cut

edges. To Henry the mountains were interesting, they were the only mountains he had ever seen that looked new, their clean cut outlines just formed, as though some planetary convulsion had yesterday flung them up from the deep Archean rocks, new cut by awful, sudden force.

AHEAD, THE canyon broadened. and their ship planed down between the sheer cliff faces to land before a black wall of Cyclopean blocks, beyond which the tall square unornamented walls of a city rose. stark utilitarian, military as a fortress. These were a war-like people. Henry realized, they wore uniforms, they flew in formation, their city was a fortress, their words were clipped and short and too-often unsmiling. He did not like them, but he admired them.

He was led at a fast walk between two files of six, women on one side, men on the other. Through the great grey metal gates, straight up the middle of a block-paved street, the people pausing only for a glance at him, then passing on as if there was for them no time to discuss even such a strange animal as Henry must appear to them.

Past the guards before a great doorway, and they came to halt before a great throne of severe polished black stone. About the throne lounged a score of uniformed males, bigger than the men Henry had yet seen, their weapons at their belts ornamented with silver chasings. It was almost the first decoration, of any kind he had seen among them, and the long pistol-type weapons interested him, for he could not but wonder how they worked.

They stood there waiting for a good fifteen minutes, and Henry real-

ized he was being given the good old business, being made to realize the importance of the personage who was too busy to see them at once.

Then she came through the far arched doorway, passing under the smoky flames of the wall torches that Henry realized must be burnt continually even in daylight to give the damp stone vastness of the chamber some sense of warmth.

She strutted, her hips swayed, and Henry watched her undulate up to her throne with a rather bored feeling, it was just like a movie—the sex laid on a little too thick, her act was to Henry's worldly eye a little corny—but it seemed to go over big with the local gallery.

Everyone in the place sank to one knee as she passed, staying there until she seated herself. Henry remained standing, and was a little shaken by the fire from a battery of frowns his unbent knee touched off.

In spite of her Queenly strut and toe-obvious acting of her part—she was a finely built woman, of perhaps thirty by earth standards. Her eyes were wide-set and dark, long-lashed and strikingly full of that intensity which comes either from experience in being boss—or acting.

She was the first female of the Quanes he had seen without the kilted uniform. She wore instead a gown seemingly made of tiny emeralds held together with glittering silver threads. Over the lush thrust of her high breasts, the emeralds parted, swept aside, were replaced by a soft pleated stuff of brilliant scarlet. The proud arches of her hips were accented by an inset filagree of silver. As she sat, the gown parted up the side to reveal the milky-white, alien symmetry of her leg, out-thrust grandly in the best tradition of royalty.

SHE WAS beautiful as sin, was Henry's reaction. Beautiful, deadly, venomously evil—and irresistible—the words stopped in Henry's head. She couldn't be all those things! There was something wrong with his reactions.

But the male in him yearned toward that body on the throne, and the good soul inside him was revolted at the stark cruelty in her eyes, the lust on her lips as she smiled down—a lust that Henry knew very well was not for himself, but for the amusement he might bring her as he tried to adjust, to escape her, to remain himself.

She didn't bother with him long, merely looked him over with an amused smile, and Henry found himself led off to a—it looked like a cell in a prison to Henry. The only difference was there weren't any bars. The window opened on a sheer drop of hundreds of feet. The building was hung on the edge of a chasm, which must terminate the canyon up which the plane had flown to the city.

Henry leaned on the wide rock sill of his cell window, looking out on that alien world, and feeling more discouraged than ever. Was this Queen to whom he couldn't even talk, not knowing her language, what he had come all this endless path of repetitious peril to find? Was this alien, over-militarized handsome people the glory he had hoped to find upon an alien, *different* world? Was this, then, all there was to the universe—just repetition without sufficient variation to even interest his mind?

Inside his mind a hissing little voice made a singing answer—"No, Henry. I know what you seek, and I have it for you. Find Sassani, she can show you the heart of your

quest, the hymeneal flame of ecstasy, the infinitudes of peril and the depths of being within being. Sassani is what you seek, not these warlike robots of repetition."

"Sassani" whispered Henry, and in his heart a warm flow of emotion told him that he had not been forgotten. There was yet a chance that all his effort had not been a fool's errand.

Henry watched the alien glory of a double sunset spread its interlaced flame-tails of fiery peacocking along the mountained horizon, stretched his long limbs sleepily as the dark swept down.

Henry slept. In his sleep there came the little swirling wind he knew was Sassani, the swirl tightened, her figure formed within the whirl, stepped out into his sleep. Henry felt soft arms around him, felt the lift and pull, the sensation of flight.

SUDDENLY he was awake. Beneath him was an abyss of darkness, overhead the alien stars, on his face the sharp keening wind. About his chest soft arms pressed deep and strong. He turned his head, his eyes gazed into the star-sparkling deeps of Sassani's eyes. She laughed, a little note that ran up and down the scale deliciously.

"The Quanes are not alone in having wings, you know, Henry."

"You stole me? You took me out of their prison on wings—you are strong!"

For the first time Henry Parr realized that Sassani was flesh. Her appearance as a whirling mist, her transparent picture of herself as a blue mist of stars, wavering, fragile, lovely as the webbed rays of the stars made visible against the blue; had given him the impression she was

some kind of being of another dimension, a fragile kind of ghost of thought energy. But the flesh of her body above him was very real and full of throbbing vitality. There was a perfume of unmistakable femininity about her, a flowered crisp clean odor like no other in his memory.

"Why did you take the risk?"

"We need your otherworld knowledge to survive. The risk was not so great as not to rescue you. Once they had learned what you know, we would never defeat them."

"I can't see what good my special knowledge will do you, Sassani. It has nothing to do with weapons."

"I know. You will see, presently. See below is the end of that way you were upon when you followed my mist picture out of the desert. If I had only gone to you then with many, guarded you, it would have saved me this risk."

Henry looked down, saw the pale gleam of a ribbon of highway, and at its upper end on the side of the mountain, the green tall city—like an ice city, or emeralds on snow-glittering softly in the dark, the alien planes of it sweeping down and around, meeting at the end of the roadway. It was a vast thing, tower on tower, and wall on wall, unsubstantial it seemed, like a cloud city seen transiently. Sassani swooped down and Henry's breath caught as she banked and turned and spiraled on down, the soft hissing of the jets sounding very like her voice on the desert had sounded—"sssaassani."

Even as they settled to the broad roof, the sound of jets overhead rose higher, the wind keening from the wingblades, and Sassani thrust him to his face, flat on the roof. She crouched over him, her wings a wide covering shadow in the dark,

and her hand held a wide-snouted gun. She fired, a sharp twang like a bow-string, again and again. The wings overhead faltered, to one side a crash as a body fell. Another crash, and then beside them were others like Sassani, and Henry stared unbelieving at the strange graceful people whom he had not seen before. Sassani's shape he had guessed at as she held him beneath her in flight, but how wrong he had been. Female, thinking, vastly attractive to him in the kinship of her thinking, but now he saw that these people were not human as he knew them in any way. Soft sleek white fur covered their bodies, supple long bodies, with great dark eyes; they seemed to see in this gloom like cats, running and firing at the pursuit overhead which had dared to follow them into the very heart of the city.

Sassani slipped off the wings, left them lying, tugged at his hand to guide him from the roof. Now and again the shapes speeding overhead made their presence deadly, as little darts bounded from the roof-top near to their running feet. Then they had entered a door, were descending a long ramp.

Sassani kept her soft furred paw in his, as he slowed, walked more easily by his side.

LIGHTS glowed in the greenish glass-like walls, deep in the material, a liquid kind of light that ran and bubbled like falling water over rocks, through all the wall.

By the light Henry examined the creature by his side more closely, ceasing only to stare as she smiled a little derisively at his avid eyes.

The beauty that is a cat's, the tall grace that is called human, had here been wedded into one creature. The round skull, the tufted, pointed ears

over the too-round eyes, the pointed tongue that licked her smiling lips, the sharp little fangs that were her teeth, the smooth sleek shoulders sloping into the long utterly able arms—Henry found his Sassani wholly charming. Her waist was very small, and a wide circlet of golden metal rested on the smooth furred hips. From the golden circlet a gold-meshed net swung to her knees, front and back. It was her only garment.

"What are your people called?" asked Henry.

"We are called the Tarsi, and we consider ourselves not at all beast-like. It would be better if you tried to think of our appearance as human and acceptable, rather than as you do."

"How can you speak to me, I do not even hear it, I only know it inside!"

"It is our way of speech, and it does not require words at all. We use images, and the images behind the word's you think are visible to my mind's eyes. So we do not need speech, you and I."

"Why do you fight with the Quanes?"

"They came here at conjunction, nearly twenty years ago, in great numbers. We did not try to war with them, not knowing their nature. They began to make slaves of us, and we had to fight for our existence. We are a wiser and an older race, and we will win! But now at first we lose too heavily, too many of our cities have been evacuated, we are crowded, harassed night and day by attacks, raids upon our farmers. They wreck our commerce, they feed upon the spoils of their raids, they do not have vulnerable commerce like ourselves, or farms or a world full of people. They have only their armies, and they live by fighting us. We can

only win by destroying them all. That takes time, for their weapons are good."

"They are from another planet?"

"Yes, their home is a world whose orbit is very close to our own. At certain conjunctions, due to orbital variance, the crossing is very easy, made with jet planes in sealed cabins. They came then in great numbers, and we let them, not wishing to start war unless they attacked us. I was wrong to hold back."

"It is always wrong to let an aggressor have any success at all."

They had descended more of the long winding ramps, and Henry watched the ever changing light, the soft grass that grew golden along the ramps sides, the little beds of flowers reaching along the walls, the hanging baskets of living plants giving off strange little wisps of scented vapor. Watching the architecture of the place unfold about him, the leaping buttresses upholding all this mass of greenstone above, the massive weight of it that yet was piled so easily as if it was all but fragile dream stuff. Everywhere upon the surface of the welded stone were little transparent hand wrought incut carvings, like Swedish glass, lit from beneath with the changeable flow of light, breathless beauty incut in every inch of the stone that was translucent as glass.

"Your race has a fine talent for engineering."

"They have many talents, this is the least of their work. You will see. You will love us, Henry Parr, or we will fail to prove ourselves that we deserve a stranger's love. Did you love the Quanes?"

"Not overmuch."

"You would have loved them less had I left you there. You were slated for some amusing ordeals, such as

battling a Tarsi captive with bare hands, or to be pitted against an armed Quane warrior with nothing but your hands, or perhaps the women would have baited your ignorance of their ways with mock love, and you would have learned at the end that the whole theatre of people were watching you in mirrors unknown to you. A simple thing, that, but it would have humiliated you. Such things you would have undergone, to be saved again and again for much more amusing tricks, and in the end they would have killed you out of boredom with you. They know little but war, and they were planning many amusements with the alien. I can see such things in their minds, you know."

"I suppose you are right. But I thought their Queen was rather attractive."

SASSANI stopped in her tracks. "That old she-devil," her mind stormed at him. "She has slain a dozen lovers with poison because she tired of them. Don't speak of her."

"Oh, well," mused Henry, who could not help thinking, "I am only a man. She looked very beautiful."

Sassani stormed on in automatic answer to his inadvertent thought. "She is beautiful as a fire is beautiful, as a snake is beautiful, as a poisonous potion can be beautiful in the glass before you. But to have that beauty—would have cost you your life."

"That's nice to know," murmured Henry.

"If I believed you really found that Queen beautiful, if I thought that the seeking I see in your mind for something more worth having in life was a false thing, I would have left you there to learn more about the Quanes' ways!"

"Listen, Sassani. I sense in you an affection for me, an emotion greater than seems exactly called for when you think of me. Why is that, Sassani? Why do you have an affection for me, a stranger? We could never mean more to each other than friends, we are two different races, we could not even bear children."

"You have had your dreams, Henry, or you would not have worked so long to escape the rutted pattern of your life. I have had mine, too. They were not like you, but when you came across the barriers that we had thought only we Tarsi knew—when you came to solidity upon our sphere of being and I found you—I saw in you the answer to those dreams. The dreams of far places, you could tell me, even show me how to go there. The dreams of greater, fuller life, of more intense sensings in a field of energy vastly more beneficial—the dreams of greater fecundity—the dreams of strange, impossible love between minds separated by gulfs to time, of space, of alienage—I have had many dreams. I believe that dreams are something important, to follow. In a way I follow you, Henry Parr."

"You, follow me? I don't understand!"

"I admire the courage to experiment which opened the door of the spheres to you. I admire your curiosity which led you through sphere after sphere seeking difference—something better. I want to be like you. Can't you see that?"

"I had thought of you as more able, more wise than myself. I had thought you found me amusing, and were interested from a purely logical impulse to know more of me. I did not know I was the answer to a maiden's dreams!"

Sassani laughed. "Hardly that, Henry Parr. You are much more than that.

You are the answer to a nation's aspirations, the key to our future. We do not mean to lose the key."

Her laugh contained a little mockery, as though Henry were very dense not to know why she treated him so affectionately. Henry had followed her down many long spiral stairs now, his legs were weary. At last she led him into...impossible wonder.

HENRY stood in awe of the vast chamber to which she had led him. Whatever the science of this race, he could not expect to understand it soon. This was going to take years. A lot of years.

The place was not a perfect sphere, but some calculated ovoid whose shape was such that the eye could not be sure it was quite regular. A tapered ovoid, perhaps, with intersecting smaller spheres making adjacent rooms, the intersecting planes almost invisible, so that the eye wandered, bemused, trying to form a concept of the true shape and being unable.

There was a vast gleaming pillar of pulsing light, prisoned in transparency, in the center. About it were ranged glittering small complexities that throbbed, or whirled, or just waited, unmoving, for the activating touch of an experimenter's hand. Long aisles swept between the glittering, incomprehensible complexities, and down the aisles moved a score of the white-furred man-things. They did not wear the wide circlet of gold and the delicate draping gold mesh that swung between Sassani's long supple legs. They wore instead dark robes that covered their bodies and arms, ending at the knees. Over their heads was tied a veil of silver mesh, which Henry divined had something to do with protecting their skin, their eyes, from the powerful light that pulsed everywhere in the huge,

irregular chamber.

Sassani greeted the first of them with an embrace, crying out: "I have brought him to you, see that you do as well for him as I have done!" There was a gladness in her voice, an exultation, Henry realized that these creatures had wanted possession of him tremendously.

"Will you tell us how you traversed the universes—where you came from, how? It is to us the deepest mystery!" The Tarsi whom Sassani had embraced spoke to Henry, his "voice" was very different from hers, deeper, more penetrating, with a consciousness of power and a pride in it, that told Henry here was one of the ruling figures of this race, this city.

"It is a rather simple device I invented for change of state. I change matter to a gas in a certain way that does not kill the living matter. Rising, one finds that light drives the living gas to its limit, and that there, the relative solidity of the gas, expanded as it is—is exactly the same as if it were still solid. That is, it is so tenuous that all the other tenuousities are the parts of a new world. Such is our world of life, a place where things are relatively similar in solidity. To travel into the next upward world of relative substantiality, it is only necessary to expand enough."

Henry's simply expounded account was received with a vast incredulity. "You are making dolts of us. We cannot comprehend at once—would you show us—here—in our laboratory—duplicate this apparatus?"

"Of course, but you see, it is a one way trip. There is no return. What use would it be to you?"

"It is like the legend of the soul!" One of the strange beast-like figures moved as if to bow before Henry, but the leader stopped him with a gesture.

"Let me see if I understand, stranger. You say that to travel as you

have, I have only to expand like a blown up bubble, and suddenly—poof—I am solid again, but in another relative arrangement of solidities. Hmmm! It is hard to believe, but there are similiar phenomena which are known, and there is the legend of the soul, many things come to mind to bear you out. But as you say, it is a thing of little use, since one cannot return. Hardly, useful to our struggle with the invading Quanes, eh?"

"Hardly," answered Henry. "But on my world we have many weapons which I do not note here, although you have evidently a greater science, it is very different. Perhaps something I might remember would be of use. But I am not of a mind to aid you against these people until I am more sure that they are really evil."

THE TALL white-furred one turned to Sassani with a smile baring his sharp needle-teeth. "You brought him away too soon, Sassani. He likes these murderous Quanes still!"

Sassani bristled her face-fur in a grimace. "And if I had left him longer, I could not have been sure to get him back in one piece, my brother."

"Ah, well," the brother went on in the same deep mental voice that Henry found surprising, it was hard to realize that mental talking could be so much like oral—and yet so much swifter, so full of emotional nuance, of thrilling intimate contact of mind to mind, so revealing of beauties hidden before to the mind's eye by the crude words, "Ah well, it is a matter soon remedied by showing him some photo-films of their deeds. They are evil, but perhaps it is the callous attitude they take toward us—that we are but beasts and so fit only for slaughter. They are not so deadly cruel to their own mind. I wonder just what would have been Henry's

fate in their hands?"

"He found that bloody Queen of theirs *beautiful*!"

"That is hard to understand, Sassani. But then she is similar to his own race in shape. Are you jealous, little sister?"

"Well, I did like him. But it is impossible to think of there being anything between us, he pointed that out!"

The brother laughed, patted her shoulder. "You are incurable. He could never be happy among such as we. Kind mates with kind, sister."

Sassani was indignant that her mental secrets should be so bandied about. "Both of you are impolite to mention what lies in a woman's heart. How can I help what I feel? Of course it is impossible, but he appeals to me, and that is the way it is. Besides, there are mental communions that are vastly more satisfying than mere flesh and blood union, you should know that. Why should I not dream of such things?"

"Well, sister, if you really wanted, I could have you both *translated*, but I should hate to lose you."

Sassani was silent, and though Henry wondered what *translation* might mean, he did not ask. He liked the contact of Sassani, from the first her ways had fascinated him, but when he saw her real shape without his imaginings confusing the picture, he knew that she was too vastly different for love between them. It was a ridiculous fact they would have to forget, their sudden attachment. Something to do with his own despair and her rescue of him, something to do with her own imaginative mind attaching itself to his alien thought too enthusiastically. Henry could not believe that sex relations between them were seriously considered by Sassani. What she meant when she mentally thought of their

"love" was something vastly different from his own concept, he knew.

BUT HER brother, whose name was Rovpal, was conducting Henry through the laboratory. "This place, he explained, "has developed for many lifetimes. It is dedicated to the purpose of making life more interesting. We have succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of those who began this work long long ago. There is a great deal we can teach you, once we get the war with the Quanes out of the way. You know the main trouble with life and the senses with which we enjoy life is the presence of disintegrative forces which disrupt and nullify the thought fields in the mind, and cause a steady accumulative burn in the body that is age. We used to think that radium was the only radioactive responsible—but we have learned that nearly every element contains a large number of molecules that are radioactive. Carbon, which is in every molecule of the body, nearly, itself has radioactive isotopes which get into the body. The body is integrative, life is a product of the integration of many diverse forces and kinds of matter into a living whole. Disintegrative parts, emanations, radiations of a disintegrative source, have no place in life processes and must be eliminated. Doing this has become a complicated development, a product of nearly a thousand of your years of effort by our best scientific minds. We have learned, in that time, a great deal about life and what to do to make it vastly more than it seems to be to one not knowing how it can be improved by removing the flows of disintegrative radiations, the accumulations of radioactive material from the body, and by treating the body with integrative force flows. You will learn—Henry Parr. I can see in your mind that

this side of the science of life has been untouched by your people."

Henry was listening intently, watching as Rovpal stopped before each little intricacy and explained its working with mental messages of extreme rapidity, then passing on to the next as he swiftly gave Parr an over-all picture of the work of the vast lab.

Henry was soaking up a picture of a science before which his own knowledge of what earth science could do paled into a glimmer of inconsequence. The lives of these creatures must be a multiple of the kind of life he knew—a full, mentally rich flood of thrilling experience. Suddenly the air vibrated, sound crashed in, Henry crouched to the floor as a terrific blast from overhead shook the massive green walls, quivered the solid floor like a jelly!

Boom! Brrroooooooooommm!!

SASSANI fell to the floor beside him, moaning and pressing her long slender paw-like hands to her pointed ears. Rovpal's face grimaced in terrible pain from the concussion.

"They have explosive?" asked Henry in bewilderment. He had not seen anything of explosive weapons among the Quanes.

But there was no time for explanations, for anything, it seemed. The terrible explosions followed each other without surcease.

Boom, brrooom! Boom, boom, brrooom!

Sassani was crouched in a prayer-like attitude. Her great round eyes swung to her brother's.

"It is time, Rovpal! We must activate the translator, send everyone through. Instead of developing defenses, we have created the translator. Now it must serve as a means of escape. Now we must use it, without more delay! Do not wait too long,

my brother. To be wrong in your waiting, would mean the end of our race...

"You are right, dear little sister. I have been absorbed, criminally negligent. We will begin at once, let them have this worn-out plane."

To Henry they were thinking incomprehensible concepts. The translator they pictured to each other in their swift thought—what was it that they indicated it could be escape for a whole city's people?

"Go, gather them all, lead them here. I will have the door open for them to pass through."

Swift as a panther, Sassani was off, leaping across the shaking floor, her hands holding her ears against the terrific blasts that must be ripping off the whole top of the city above them.

"You send her out into that?" asked Henry, thinking again without conscious volition. He could not catch the knack of this thought-talking, everything that ran through his mind seemed to be heard by the Tarsi.

"We cannot stop now to think of individual safety," Rovpal had rejoined the other workers who had remained at their labors, hurled this last at Henry as he gestured to his fellows. The whole group's sudden activity told Henry that the "translation" was going to begin. The confused pictures he had received from their ultra-rapid thought of this translation told him only that the very atoms of the body had to be altered by a change in charge brought about by a certain electric flow. The result was existence changed into some other form, a form he could not telepathically receive for he had never experienced it. He was wildly curious as to what they were going to do with such a change as a defense.

Lying on the floor, watching these alien beings, busily assembling a vast bank of tiny mechanisms, focusing a series of lenses, wheeling up great strange generators and cabling them together—Henry saw he would be only in the way if he tried to help. He wanted to do something, there was such an urgency in the thought he kept sensing in this strange city where everyone's thought echoed and re-echoed as if some built-in property of the very rock made it a place where thought could never be concealed. Parr wondered if that were true, and an answering thought told him he had hit upon it.

Henry decided to go and seek Sassani and try to help her. He picked himself up and moved to go out the door by which he had entered. Rovpal and his fellows paid no attention.

Henry raced back up the stairs which had given his legs the shakes in their too-long descent. Excitement from the continuing bombardment lent him strength, he wanted to see just what was happening that the Tarsi planned on fleeing into some strange "plane".

THROUGH an opening at the side of the great stair. Henry saw a sudden distant flash, heard the resulting "Boom" a moment later. He raced toward the opening, stood upon a little balcony overlooking the wide, canyon-like street. At each side the mighty glass-like structures of this amazing people towered up and up, and high overhead he saw the sleek long bodies of the Quane planes speeding past, saw the long bombs scream down, burst upon the roofs far above with terrific destruction. Through the street just below him poured the white-furred people, not in panic, but with intent movement toward some refuge of which they

knew. The white tide of Tarsi were flowing along the street, and now behind him on the stair he saw the throng, descending in bounding leaps, pouring down into that depth beneath the ground-level of this weird city to the great chamber where Rovpal labored to make for them an escape-way.

It was hopeless to think of finding Sassani in such a crush. Henry turned back from the sight of the city's destruction.

It was with a kind of dull despair that Henry followed the leaping throng of alien beings. Down and down, and now they entered that great irregular chamber where Rovpal had set up the translator.

In that chamber a change had taken place. Strange vapors swirled, red-lit with pulsing eerie lights that seemed themselves like vapor. Across the center of the place a great circle of blue flame throbbled, the face of the circle mirror-like, glistening and reflecting the white graceful bodies of the Tarsi.

From the ceiling to the floor it stretched, alien forces vibrated across it like flames across the sky of another world—a world of fire, blue fire.

It was a web of force spun by these workers, a web of force that Henry suspected was a ladder into another kind of existence. A low ramp had been erected up to the base of the great disc of blue force, and up this ramp the Tarsi pushed, to disappear into that fearful circular plane of strange fire. Fear clutched at Parr as he felt himself pushed along with the hurrying people, he did not want to step into that frightening thing, but he did, as those behind pushed on.

A LONG LINE of limbless, lovely, serpentine, seemingly, floating beings stretched ahead of Henry; a

column of marching, sparkling fountain-like shapes reaching into the distance. That distance was not the planet upon which the city of the Tarsi sat, it was not the mountains and deeps and sandy deserts of that land he knew as Sassani's home.

It was the blue force-field of weird magnetic tension which formed the face of the disc Rovpal had created. That was no disc, it was a door into another kind of place than any Henry had imagined existed. Here matter did not exist, solidly and irrefutably present. Instead it vibrated softly, changing always like a shifting jewel. In the distance there were tall whirling towers of dark force, and closer at hand little shifting hummocks of blue translucence, speared through with shafts of violet and rose and glowing, fiery gold. Across the plane of the distance little whirlpools of scarlet fountained, moved softly for a moment, disappeared. In a moment they reappeared farther on, dancing in patterns of movement that must be dictated by a thinking mind within the strange vibrant pulse of them.

Henry suddenly was aware of a blue veil singing, softly sibilant words beside him, a too-lovely woman—shape revealed by that blue veil with the little star-lights flickering in the depths.

"Sassani!" breathed Henry in awe. This was the way he had first met her, then she had seemed to him an enchantress, beckoning him on to the thing he had sought so long.

"S,ss, sassani, yes," the woman-shape breathed. "Look at yourself, now, alien!"

Henry glanced down at his own legs, at his hands, his body. Startled, terrified, he gasped— "Sassani, what has happened to me?"

For where his legs should be was only a deep veil of violet darkness,

sprinkled through with pin-points of red sparks, through which veiled quivered long wavering streaks of night-black.

Sassani laughed, a rich eloquent sound, as of a mother listening to a child's first words.

"You have a very attractive body, here, my dear Henry. Have you not yet understood?"

"This is what you were when we first met? Then you left me, went back through the doorway to your world! Yes, I understand. That is why you loved me, because you knew that here we would be similar."

"Yes, here one's shape takes any form one wills for it. Watch—"

Swiftly her body of gold-lit blue veil swelled, became round as a ball. Then as swiftly it elongated into one long ribbon of swaying, softly dancing beauty. The lovely ribbon of gold-shot blue force curved into a long bow, the end of the curve touched Henry's head, and swift as thought, the whole length had twined about his body like a great serpent, squeezing lightly. A thrill of tremendous shocking change ran all through Parr's new form, his lips burned with sparkling, almost visible ecstasy, before his eyes a curtain of binding, rainbow color sprang and fled and came again, a wealth of unendurable pleasure swept over him in a flood.

He found himself again one, and he gasped— "What did you do to me, you sorceress?"

"I merely kissed you, blind one. Was it fun?"

"It was Heaven and Hell and the lightning of magic—it was everything! Sassani! Now I know what I have been looking for so long!"

"*There is much more, here!* For long have my brother and I explored this land of strange difference. It was the irresistible pleasures of this land that kept us from our duties to

our people, and allowed the Quanes to get the foothold here. Now we have used it to save our race from annihilation. They can return, but they will never wish to, no one can go back permanently because they cannot wish to live again in the solid world."

"That is why you did not attack, wipe out the Quanes. You had the resources, the brains to devise means to defeat them. But you did not."

"We knew that the world they warred to conquer was worthless beside this one. We have been working to build the great-gateway—but they attacked us sooner than we planned. It was my taking of you from the Queen of the Quanes that brought on the attack."

THE TWO softly whirling veils of force moved off across the strangely pleasant surface of their new world. The long column of the Tarsi in their new bodies moved on ahead, stretching as far as eye could reach ahead and back.

"Will we never return to give those fascists what they deserve?" asked Henry.

"When we are ready, we will return in this form, for they cannot affect us. But we have not explored the means of opening the way enough. We must devise a little opening to carry in the hand. Then one can see through into the solid world, even fire through the opening, and the missile would change into matter as it passed. But we have yet to learn about this land. It may be foolish effort ill-spent to bother with that solid world."

It was a land of myriad quivering veils of magic, which parted before one, revealing ever new reaches of stimulatingly different forms and colors, colors that changed subtly even as one sensed them with the

strange strong sensing that was so vividly greater; changed subtly, swiftly from one singing hue to another; and the forms shifted before one's eyes, seemingly guided by an intelligent will to assume those shapes most desired by the mind, to change again as some new will made its desires felt more strongly.

"Where is this world we have entered, Sassani?"

"We do not even know, Henry. We have only just mastered the entry and explored a little. We have been plunged into it by the invasion before we are ready. It may be time and matter and force and position are all concepts having no meaning here. This may be the planes of force in space itself. This world may have no beginning and no end, we do not know. We only know it is wonderful and that we are strong and well here, even when we are weak and old and sick in the solid world."

"Where are these people going? They seem to know..."

"Yes, Rovpal leads them to a place he and I located where the flows of this place form a more stable setting for our first city here."

"A sort of force-eddy, that would be, where this constant shifting slows. Yes, it would be easier to adjust there to the different environment."

The long column of weirdly soft shapes of what had been the Tarsi wound on and on across the shifting hills and flowing valleys of fluid, upholding force.

As they moved along, the swift mind of Sassani tried to explain the wonderland to Parr.

"You see, Henry, thought itself has always been a mystery to us, as to you. For centuries our scientists have searched for the answers of questions which your race has only begun to even visualize. They learned that

thought is an energy that sources outside the mind. They made a kind of dynamo that created the raw stuff of mental force, the stuff of which thought is constructed, and found that the thought of a man acted as a catalyst upon his force. Some thing in the mind acts as a wonderfully fecund seed when it is supplied with the thought-energy. So it is that a flow of this stuff gives one the power to make with the mind any shape one imagines. For centuries these machines were playthings of our race, it became a highly developed art to make the flowing, changing shapes such as you see about you. It is a kind of magic and these images which grow from seed thoughts have a vivid kind of life of their own, but I see that is hard for you to understand. Anyway, it finally occurred that a scientist, my father, created the force-field we call the translator. It is a door to a vast world of energies unobservable to one without the key. Here, in this world, which is a river; nay, a flowing *ocean* of the same kind of forces which the mind handles when it creates images and thought—emotions, pleasures and pains and visions—all the things you think and many more that you have never been able to think or even imagine—in this world of that thought-force, natural and plentiful as matter itself, when one steps through the field that transforms matter into integrated, tightly-bound thought-force instead of the thing we call matter—one is a being who controls the world around one. Watch!"

SASSANI, A glittering pillar of blue, webbed with glittering golden threads of light, a pillar of weird beauty which stretched out an arm of soft vibrant force and shaped a hand to speak out with will... pointed with her suddenly appeared

finger at a low brown hummock of dull, slowly flowing semi-matter nearby. From her pointing finger a golden thread of swift lightning flashed, and where it splashed into the hummock, change flowed outward from it. Swiftly the hummock grew, spiralling upward in a little fountain of sudden change, until quite suddenly it became a human-appearing being, a tall, slender man with waving brown hair, with eyes of a wondering, hungry blue, with cheeks of pale bronze and smiling, humorously twisted lips. His arms were bronzed and well muscled, his features regular and strong, his white teeth gleamed, his slender waist bent as he made a courteous bow to the tall blue pillar that was Sassani.

Suddenly Henry understood. This suddenly appeared man of earth was himself as Sassani saw him, as he had appeared to her that first day on the desert!

"Small wonder you fell in love with me, Sassani, if that is how I looked to you!"

"Yes, Henry Parr, here in this world of motile mind-controlled force we can shape our thoughts into things about us, make the world into that appearance we desire most, and then tomorrow shatter it and remold it again."

Softly Henry's thought quoted—"Shatter this sorry scheme of things entire,

"And then remould it nearer to the heart's desire."

"Exactly, Henry. That is why we did not stay to battle with the Quanes. We did not want to deprive our people of the wonders of this world to fall in battle with the stupid Quanes for a world we no longer need."

Henry was thinking of the beauty of that gold-speckled veil of blue that trembled beside him. From inside his body he saw there flowed toward

Sassani's body a flickering stream of pale red, and that where it struck her body little sections of her veil-of-being turned sotly violet, quivered faster, ecstatically answered his flow of emotion with a dancing, a quivering. From her body there flowed toward him in answer a vibrating, softly humming little stream of pure gold, that struck against his chest, spread outward, and as it spread there awoke within him a singing, an ecstatic answering vibrance, that grew and grew until his whole body was sprinkled over with dancing golden flecks, each of which was itself ecstatic pleasure.

"What...?" Henry's mind wondered at the strangely wonderful phenomenon, an interchange of visible flows of beautiful energy between them, an energy that made every spot it touched quiver with pleasure.

IT IS visible body-magnetic, Henry. It means you are falling in love with me, and that we can see our love is one new wonderful thing I learn! For see, my own body answers yours with true singing response. One can tell there is a harmony there, if that harmony was not there between our inmost beings, the flow would not be in one direction only, and would cease for lack of answer. It is true, we are mates, whether we so planned or no, it cannot be helped. Our very inward atoms are fecundating each the other. We will be bound, if it continues."

"One of nature's little traps that I cannot summon desire to escape! My desires lead all the other way."

Sassani's soft hissing energy-voice made a singing little answer in him—"Nor I, Henry. We pioneer a new world, it happens to us, we cannot escape. Let us not worry, but accept the fate."

As they looked at the long column of figures, they saw that here and

there between the couples similar semi-visible magnetic flows of love-energies were active, fecundating, binding them in that web of strange interchange from which there seemed no escape.

Presently the tall black and scarlet of Henry Parr's new body walked close beside the blue and gold fountain of lovely force that was Sassani, and two soft tendrils of round force were their arms about the other.

Now the column of refugees wound wonderingly down from the shifting mountains of changing colorful force, and found spread before them a great valley of seemingly solid soil, green with the grass their eyes imagined into being, plumed and tufted with the fruiting plants their eyes expected to find, and in the center of the lovely valley reared a crystalline castle, surrounded by the towered roofs of a city, tier by tier extending down to the banks of a stream of silvery clear water. Henry gasped with the beauty of the scene spread out before them. Sassani whispered into his black and scarlet ear: "Do not speak of the nature of this plane of being to the others. So long as they think this valley is beautiful, it will remain as you see it—as they think it. Once they learn the truth about this world, it will melt away and become only a dull mirror of their changing thoughts. It is Ropval's work, this valley, he created it with much work to welcome them, to give them time to adjust to the terrific newness of this way of life-change."

"In this eddy things remain longer, mirror still, but retentive, eh?"

"Yes, this force eddy is a retentive mirror, as you put it. So long as they all constantly renew the mirror with their preconceived thought of what is here, it will remain. Perhaps forever, so long as there is even one to seed it anew with his thought from day to

day."

The long column of lovely undulant pillars of translated Tarsi bodies wound on, softly treading the strange plane of force that was the soil, intent upon the beauty of their new world. Wound into the valley, entered between the wide spread gates of the great paved way, gates of bronze and silver, topped with Tarsi sculptures of the bodies they had had in the former existence. Lovely was the city they entered, and soft and familiar as home the darkness that descended slowly as each little grouped family separated and sought out the home which they would choose for their own.

Henry was surprised to find that Sassani was leading him toward the great castle of crystal that reared above the city.

SASSANI smiled an answer to his question— "Yes, my Henry, did you not know that my brother and I are the only Tarsi chosen by popular voice to rule? Each ten of our years there is a new choice, but for many centuries our family has been chosen to rule, and the people have not found reason to change. We are loved, Rovpal and I. So will you be, when they know you."

"Then you are a Queen?"

"No, foolish one. My brother rules, among us it is considered too strenuous work for a woman. I am only his little sister. It is not so much a high honor among us to be ruler as you think. It is a tough job which we are chosen to handle when we prove our fitness. My family are hereditarily strong and vital, so we are always picked because of ability only. When a man stronger appears, the regular tests will show it, and he will replace Rovpal. It is nothing, you must not think it is overly important. It is just a tough job, to us of the Tarsi."

"I cannot understand why such a woman as you has not already a lover?"

A little golden chuckle of pulsing light flecks ran over the blue shimmering pillar that was Sassani.

"Let me tell you a secret, Henry. It is safe to tell you now that I know what grows in your heart for me. Among the Tarsi I have always been seen to be a very ugly female."

"Impossible!" Henry was deeply shocked.

"Nevertheless it is true. To your alien eyes the things we see as beauty are not the same. You do not have our standards. When I met you, my lonely heart saw that your standards would not be ours, that you would not judge my looks by Tarsi ways of thought. So my heart leaped to ensnare yours, and succeeded. Am I honest with you?"

"Yes, I can see you speak the truth. But it is unbelievable."

"Here, in this world, my mind makes me superior to any of the Tarsi, even those who were considered most beautiful. Here, it may be different indeed. There may be many who will try to take me from you, now." Sassani's thoughts were a little impish, Henry saw, but it was true that the sinuous blue and gold of her body here was vastly more attractive than the duller, less vivid female shapes of the Tarsi women. Henry's heart sank as he contemplated having to compete with these superior trained minds of the Tarsi, a race of people who had delved deeper into thought than any human of earth had ever hoped. But the soft tentacle of blue fluid force that was Sassani's arm gave his body a reassuring pressure.

"Remember, Henry, I am prejudiced in your favor."

"Let us hope you remain so. I would hate to lose this paradise now

that I have found it."

THE ^{*}STRANGELY ^{*}unspaced ^{*}time swept by, unmarked floods of time, and Henry Parr became an active citizen of an alien people, became one of the Tarsi of the translation. Happiness such as no man ever experienced was his daily fare.

Then into the Eden the Tarsi pioneered came the serpent, as he has always come soon or late.

Into the great central chamber of the crystal palace, that chamber that Rovpal's mind had shaped to resemble so nearly the great laboratory which had sheltered the gateway of the translation, into the busy scene of laboring, tenuous pillars of force that were the translated scientists of the Tarsi—there rushed a messenger—a small green-and-white figure that fountained up in their midst suddenly, his thoughts beating at them like sudden painful blows.

"The Quanes have solved the riddle of our escape! Awaken, Tarsi!"

Rovpal, stern and huge in his vibrant strength, a great quivering droplet-shaped focus of vivid arterial crimson striped with the masculine ebon in broad bands of vertical, powerful virility; spun upon his point of force, sent his thought streaming into the messenger until he turned a dull crimson in an echoing sympathetic vibrance—"How could they have solved the problem it took the Tarsi centuries to conquer? Why do you come here shouting panic?"

"Nevertheless the Quanes are streaming through the self-same gateway by which we entered. You sent me to watch it, and they have opened it and stream through. They are horrible in this world, we will have battles terrible beyond the struggles before!"

"They must have rebuilt the orig-

inal machinery of the translator! We had no time to destroy it, we left a time-device to complete the work after the last of us came through. Perhaps they did not need knowledge..." mused the powerful figure of Rovpal. A mighty anger sang blood-red electric all through him, this their refuge should again be invaded by the Quanes! He had no doubt they were intent upon conquest, they had little else in their minds but will to dominate others.

Swiftly he gave orders. Now out of that peaceful city of green-and-white marble-like towers and battlements, up from that valley of soft green grass and silver flowing river, out of the new Eden of the Tarsi, flowed the marshaled forces of the disciplined males of the race. Back along the shifting hills and shimmering force-fields of the way they had come went the columns, not straggling now, not loving pulses of fecundant emotion between the figures now; but a wide crescent of rippling units combined into one flow of terrible anger by the outrage of this new invasion. Among them all sped the scarlet lightning of Rovpal's thoughts, reminding them of the long series of steadily mounting injuries which the Quanes had dealt them, how they had been driven from their homes... and how they would learn the ways of this changeling world of force and in the end find a way to successful conquest over the Tarsi. The scenes of the last terrible bombing that had struck down their last loved city, these scenes of death and flight, Rovpal sent broadcast among them. The very hills rose up in answer to the power of his angry thought and shaped themselves into dread shapes of revenge, into shapes of wounded and dying Tarsi citizens they had all seen die under the onslaught of the Quane warriors.

WITH THE rush of this weird army of his fellows sped Henry Parr, once man-of-earth, now greatly *more* than man-of-earth and yet only one unit of a wave of mighty God-like anger against these invaders who sought the death or enslavement of his own loved people—the capture and violation of his own Sassani.

Now in the side of the vast grey mountain they sighted the great round opening of violet wavering force that was the gateway.

Through that opening was pouring a steady stream of uniformly brown massive globules of life! As unindividual as ants, these thought-forms of the Quanes; they undulated forward in a wide column, great black spots where eyes should sparkle, long pseudopods reaching to pull them forward in inflexible imitation of gravitational procedure in walking. Henry saw then that as a man thinks, so is he, for these Quanes were the most gruesome lot of thought-images he had ever dreamed could exist. Man-ants, ants of errant unimaginable repetitious blobs of mirrored force, flowing into this Eden they had discovered to make it all one mirroring brown repetition of their own inflexible non-beauty!

From their leader, the great crimson-and-black of Rovpal, flashed now toward the brown column a mighty bolt of golden destruction, spreading and forking in its flight, until at impact point it speared into a score of the leading figures—impaled the brown massive blobs through and through; left as it withdrew again, flowing back more slowly to return to its source—left upon the violently flickering mirroring force-field only pale brownish stains spreading liquidly to be absorbed into the general flow of force.

A great shout of pain and loss sprang up from the brown column,

visible as blue and mournful flickering lightning, and from the brown blobs great spears of intended destruction sprang toward the oncoming crescent of blue and crimson and gold fountaining pillars of individualized mental life that were the Tarsi. Those spears were their quick reaction, imitating the method of fighting which must be used here in this so-different world, were their attempt to instantly adopt the methods of mind-warfare.

Parr reasoned that this had been their only preparation—that they had been so instructed by their over-confident leaders. An exultation rose in Parr's breast, he saw that their inexperience could not possibly overcome the skill of the Tarsi in their own world of thought. But that exultation died swiftly as he saw the brown spears of speeding force impale one after another of the beautiful columns of life-force and bring them down, to writhe upon the mirror of force that was the soil and slowly go out, fade into non-being. These man-ants had learned something of this plane before entering was evident. They have spent long months of preparation, scouting through the opening of the Gateway when unobserved—studying the weird thought-mirroring transformations of this world and training their warriors in the mental manipulation of the fluid non-material energy.

SORROW ran like a sudden dark lightning all along the face of the speeding crescent of Tarsi at sight of the death of their comrades, and now at Rovpal's order they each put into their outflowing thought-force the intent of barrier, and in front of the oncoming brown column swiftly arose a vast wall of blackness, a blackness shot through with the crimson gleamings of their race-anger, a wall vi-

brant with vengeful intent. Against this half-transparent wall the speeding brown blobs hurled themselves only to rebound, hurt and dazed by the force of destructive intent inherent in the very energies of which it was made.

The dreadful column of transposed Quane mentality came to a confused halt, milled in a circle, gathering like a tide of dirty brown water as the grown blobs pushed each against the other and so mingled their beings, due to their non-individuality, in a liquid, flowing, melting suddenly into individual blobs and again melting into one fluid again. The raging anger of the Tarsi now began to fling over the top of the quivering barrier of semi-darkness great swirling whirlpools, vortices of the stuff of the soil about them, picked up by their motile reaching arms of moving energy and flung spinning high, arcing down upon the invaders, spinning and rolling among them crushing—striking out with suddenly reaching arms, arms which melted, returned to the central core of the vortice and then struck out again.

The slippery stain of death spread brown about the milling pseudopod feet of the Quanes, and the brown milling tide of them visibly lessened. But through the great violet gateway still the ant-like army marched, and through the round opening Henry Parr could see the stalwart, erect human-like bodies of the Quane warriors, running up the ramp to leap into the curtain of awful force, coming to supporting soil-like force-field as changed brown creatures, still running, their legs now long quivering tentacles which swiftly lessened into round shapeless plodding members that seemed to support their monotonously similar bodies.

It was awe-inspiring to watch, and for a moment he forgot his own per-

il, but now over the barrier of their wills came great red flames, sent by the combined will of the Quanes, scorching down in a great arc toward their own fast closing lines, a crescent swiftly closing in upon the barrier-halted column of Quanes.

Scores of the beautiful columnar shapes of the Tarsi fell quivering, paled into death, lay staining the strange earth with rainbow hues that darkened slowly into sameness.

The master will of Rovpal met this flame with leaping shafts of a strange tinkling, glass-like stuff, and where the musical tinkling of the shafts met the flame, there the flame died into softened, harmless hues of pale red.

Taking their cue from Rovpal's ingenious example, the wills of the Tarsi flung up a tall hedge of the tinkling, flame neutralizing shafts, and the flames hissed harmlessly out against the new barrier that arced over the first dark wall in long shadowing combs of impentable hedging.

Now the brown horde adapted a new tactic, shaping themselves into a wedge of brown force, they plunged *en masse* against the barrier of darkness, and inch by inch it gave, shattering at last before the terrible strong suggestion of overwhelming force that the Quanes were convinced they possessed. As Henry saw this conviction of their own invincibility overcome the vastly more clever work of the Tarsi, an idea came to him, and he turned, sped back, fleeing from the line of battle. As he fled he heard the vast anger-inflamed thought voice of Rovpal cursing him for a coward, even flinging after him a shaft of speeding darkness that knocked the strength out of him for a moment. But he picked himself up and went on, there was no time for that.

The strong force of that shaft even

convinced him that he was fooling himself, that this fleeing was in truth his wish to get away from the peril of the slaughter while he had life to flee, and not the impulse to secure aid which he had at first thought. He was mightily confused and tears of hot light formed in his eyes as he sped away, for if Sassani was watching he knew her love for him would die in her breast.

THE BATTLE went on and on; the Tarsi, unable to overcome the powerful mental conviction of the Quanes in their own power, were forced back and back, and now, their numbers cut to half, they faced such superior numbers of Quane man-ants that there was in truth no hope. The mirroring forces of this world had played them false, they had not anticipated that the energy would mirror stupidity as well as cleverness, dumb belief in unconquerable strength quite as readily as their own fluid genius toward variant weapons. Back and back they sped, seeking some means of overcoming the onswEEPing brown tide, and now their backs were to the deep valley of green that was their home.

Here, above the valley they rallied, and out from the lovely city of crystal and gold and bronze sped the glittering veils of soft force that were their women; sped the soft, lithe loving shapes of their wives—out to meet death battling beside their mates. Ebon striped male pillars were now spaced side by side with the lovely woman-forms of the vibrant energy bodies of the Tarsi women, and out from their massed lines sped bolt after bolt of raw hate, made into destructive shafts of death by the magic of the stuff of this world.

But havoc though they wrought among the Quane columns, sweeping

on and on inexorably they came, and in every Tarsi breast the blue sorrow quivered and spread like the poison of death itself!

Then, striking terror into Quane as well as into Tarsian, a strange vast shape hove over the distant mountains, came speeding out of the depths of the far horizon with great world shaking thuds of feet, a shape inexplicable and vast.—An entire terrible mountain of motion, slow turning within its own inertial vastness, a mountain plucked by some miracle and moving down upon the combined entangled battle lines like the avalanche of fate itself overcoming all—and Quane and Tarsi broke before the terrible sight and fled right and left, back and front—scattered to escape the vast rolling weight of a moving mountain out of the peaked horizon of the world.

It was a mountainous veil of violet darkness, shot through with great flaming points of red fire, striped again and again with the great ebon stripes of Tarsi maculinity. On and on it rolled, towering above the hosts like the broad face of a God, towering like the far tornado of angry space itself, torn loose by a God and hurled down upon the brawling races of lesser being.

The hosts of embattled warriors separated, the brown tide of the Quanes fell back, their tall brown leaders striving to rally them ineffectually, so that between the armies there opened a wide lane of peace.

DOWN THIS lane of silence between the forces the terrible mountain of fire-shot moving anger moved with vast pillaring legs shaking the soil, waking the echoes as an earthquake wakes echoes from the heart of the earth beneath.

Straight to the center of the two facing armies it marched, spun slow-

ly, facing the Quanes with terrible vast eyes of fire-shot darkness, spinning orbs of death-intent spearing shafts of fear-flow into the breasts of the Quanes, so that they fell to the ground in death or fled incontinent before the face of doom.

Now the legs retreated into the vast body, and the tall mountain became round, a great rolling cylinder, crushing, rolled over and over, turgidly, slowly, crushing toward the backing, turning horde of brown Quane warriors. Faster it rolled and faster, now the Quanes sped away before the terror like curs before a bear.

The brown horde became a speeding flight of quivering blobs of fear, and the fireshot violet mountain paused for a moment watching, and then a strange thing happened which no Tarsi understood.

Out from the weary lines of the Tarsi shot a blue and gold streak of speed, sped to the vast violet mountain of force, climbed swiftly up its side and settled there upon the peak of it!

From the gold and blue of the woman Sassani little golden flows of meaning went down into the mountain, like threads of visible love.

Now, with the blue and gold of Sassani upon the top of the rolling cylinder, the vast crushing force rolled off, faster and faster, and the speeding Quanes were overtaken blob after blob, group after group, column after column, until as the great circle of the gateway came into sight there were but scores of the Quanes who reached and sped through the circle of purple light and out into the land of the solid, material plane again.

The mountain turned now, rolled softly upon the circle of the gateway from the side, the pillar of gold and blue urging it on, and there the force of it was materialized into its other-

world nature of rock and earth, piled there like an immovable mountain where it merged with the matter of the other side of the gateway.

Then, arm in arm, down the now immovable and bound force of the doom that had caught up with the Quanes came two tall shimmering pillars of energy, and between the two strangely lovely beings there was webbed a golden and scarlet tangle of violently moving threads of terrific intent—of vivid ecstatic love—thought so intense as to be visible as hard steel.

Up to meet the two pillars of beauty came a long line of weeping, yet rejoicing beings, who made themselves into a great walking support upon which the two lovers, Henry Parr and Sassani of the Tarsi, were borne home to the city Parr had saved from destruction.

"You see, Sassani, we could not have beaten their stupid belief in their own powers, because the energy here reflected it according to the amount of mass-strength of their thought. So to defeat them, I had to go and acquire a mountain which had not yet reflected their fecund seed-thought. Over the horizon, I mounted upon a great mass of virgin energy, impregnated it with my own seed-thoughts thoroughly so that I had a greater mass of energy reflecting my will than that of their army, and by sheer weight of momentum of reflection, overcame their massed weight of belief. It was a question of the overwhelming mass meeting the irresistible ego of stupidity—and the greatest mass won, naturally."

Sassani merely whispered, hissing— "SSSH, Henry Parr, I knew it was you by the virility, the lovely color of the mountain."

"Did you doubt me when you saw me flee?"

"I—I tried to understand, but I

could not. It was a terrible emotion to have, the feeling that you had turned coward nearly killed me."

"I was afraid it would kill your love, Sassani, sorccress... But it did not!"

"No, as you can see, it is very much alive."

Henry looked into the sparkling depths, of her, and a slow flush stole over the dark violet, a flush of scarlet, throbbing, strange ecstasy. For within the vibrant webs of her inner

being, a little new life was nested, peacefully sleeping—waiting to be born.

"A blessed event, Sassani, is going to take place one of these days!"

As Sassani's mental gaze followed Henry's intent gaze, sheer golden surprise swept all through her in singing sudden flames of dancing beauty. Her laughter tinkled into rich arpeggios that he should know before herself...

THE END

BEST SELLER SCIENCE FICTION

By

CHARLES RECOUR



WE'RE ALWAYS popping off with the theme that science fiction is really growing into a sizeable branch of modern literary activity, in which *Amazing Stories* is taking the lead. The public, much of which has always connected science fiction with "Buck Rogers" has come to know and respect the field. This is born out not only by the fantasy films, the magazines, the radio plays etc. but also by a number of best-selling books.

For example, a new book has appeared called *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, by George Orwell. This book is quite the rage. And it is strictly science-fiction written from the standpoint of a strong character study as well as a sociological viewpoint. But if the book is concerned with a political development it is also, human and laced with the marvels of the future.

In some ways it is a satire in the great tradition, of Swift and Voltaire. But that adds to its fascination. This is the idea: the world in nineteen eighty-four is split into three societies, Oceania, Eurasia, and North America. These societies are perpetually at war with each other. Their citizens are nothing but robots. The State is all. It is as if Communism had conquered the world. The warfare which continually exists serves to occupy the peoples and uses up their resources thus providing constant work for all. But in the process, man has become little better than an ani-

mal. The State thinks for him, provides him with work, supervises his reproduction and so on. It watches everything including his living and his thinking. Every home has in it a two way television set, so that the citizen can be closely watched at all times. It is a grim lifeless world into which the hero injects a note of honest rebellion.

The book is strictly science-fiction from the TV sets to the guided missiles whizzing overhead. And it is a grim picture of what the future can be like and *may* be like without democracy in the world. It is nightmarish because it seems so possible. One of the fascinating elements of the story concerns the attempts of the State to provide all citizens with the education of a new language called *doublethink*, in which a word means exactly not what you think. *That* "slavery" means freedom and "freedom" means slavery.

The methods of the secret police, the tortures of the inquisitors, make the Nazi and Communist acts of cruelty look like child's play. Here strong nerves are needed to stand some descriptions of exceedingly grisly scenes.

It makes us happy to see this popular and sensitive interest in what we regard as the future field of literary as well as scientific effort, namely, science-fiction. Read *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and weep for the state of civilization which can even have such a horror as a remote but too terrifyingly near possibility!



There came a savage yell and Pratt faced his attackers

OF BATTLE

By J. J. ALLERTON



It seemed that this world had been created for just one purpose, as a battleground. Conflict overwhelmed everyone who set foot on its surface.

‘OLD BALDY’ showed his dun-colored top, twenty miles ahead. And in between, was the barren desert, with only a cactus rearing its twisted, melancholy shape to relieve the monotony of flatness. The narrow ribbon of highway was a straight line, one end of which was his truck and the other, Old Baldy.

Theodore Pratt Marsh hummed a tuneless, cheerless air. And hunched

closer over the wheel. Totomachi’s hairpin turns and sudden, breath-taking dips took all the skill and strength of his arms to negotiate. Then he was over the last rise and was swooping down into the last turn.

Pratt Marsh was thankful for the full moon, this night. This last curve was almost a right-angled one. And the long trailer body had to be swung over far to the left, in order safely to

make the grade. He braked gently and shifted into third. .and felt the lever's free motion.

"...Cat's! Something's wrong!" he yelped, as the shifting lever rode free without meshing.

Sweat broke out on his forehead. And the night wind, cool and clean, turned the perspiration into the clammy feel of death's touch.

Pratt's eyes narrowed into piercing watchfulness. The slightest wrong move would send the truck careening over the sheer side of the mountain, to fall the half mile into the canyon below. And in the thirty-foot trailer behind him was thirty thousand gallons of high test aviation gasoline. Too quick a turn would shift the liquid cargo and tip the truck.

And he was riding free!

He depressed the brake pedal gently. Already the trailer wheels had gathered enough momentum to make the whole business of braking, risky. And if he let the pedal down all the way, it would just burn out the brake lining. He let his foot come off it slightly, then pressed gently at it once more. He could feel the back end ride up hard. He caught sight of the speedometer. The needle was at the fifty mark! And just ahead, a hundred yards, was the blind turn.

This was it. He had to let the truck come out past the center line just so far, then bring it in, and not too fast, either, toward the right. He was around the curve and almost where he was safe. And a car came up the grade at a speed far beyond the judicious, and too fast for maneuvering on the narrow, two lane highway.

Pratt's lips framed curses, even as his strong hands twisted savagely at the steering wheel. Behind him, the trailer answered the command of the wheel. He could almost feel the gas shifting in its steel envelope. And *did*

feel the trailer tip! He rode the wheel desperately giving it all the right it would take, until the outside wheels were almost on the soft shoulder. The trailer tipped crazily right and left, then as he brought the truck to an even keel, the other car swept by.

His hands were wringing wet and were clamped so tight against the steering wheel, he loosened the fingers only with an effort. A deep sigh welled up from within him. The worst was now over. It was all down hill but with only a two per cent grade. Then he was on the flat and riding smoothly once again.

He knew there was a filling station at the foot of Baldy. And a repair shop at the rear of the station. The truck was in gear and all he had to do was keep rolling.

The miles sped by. He had the road all to himself. Not another car was to be seen. He drove with one hand on the wheel and the other draped out the cab. The wind swept through the open window and cooled his warm skin. The desert was smooth with only the slightest undulations of sand formations. And the moonlight was as bright as sunlight. He passed a Saguaro cactus and saw that the shadow cast by the giant tree was as distinct as if the sun had cast it. He stuck his head out of the cab window and looked up.

The moon was a great silver ball riding against a deep blue backdrop. Never had he seen so great a moon. It seemed to fill the whole sky. Suddenly he blinked his eyes. And stepped hurriedly on the brake. The truck came to a smooth stop.

He blinked his eyes again. Something was wrong! He looked up at the moon again. And knew that his first glance had not been wrong. The moon was growing in size! But that was impossible. .unless the moon was coming closer.

Pratt's mouth opened in a grotesque grimace...and froze that way. Not only was the moon coming closer but the whole landscape was acting as though he was on a ship in a heaving sea. The desert swam before his eyes...the moon kept getting larger...larger...larger!

Then something gripped his senses, a vast pressure took hold of his mid-section and made him double up in horrible, excruciating pain. And an invisible hammer struck him across the back of his head. Blackness enveloped him.

PRATT opened his eyes and felt nausea grip him. Hurriedly, he opened the cab door...and flew out. *Literally flew!* He went skidding a good ten feet, gathering a mouthful of fine sand as he did so.

He lay face down for several seconds until he felt he could safely arise. Then with a single movement he came to his feet...and went sailing twenty feet straight up into the air. He landed on straddling legs. And remained rooted to the spot on which he stood. A sickly, silly grin spread over his mouth. He had landed, facing the truck. With infinite caution he made his way to the truck, sliding one foot past the other in a shuffling slow motion dance. Slowly, he lowered himself to the running board and sat there, looking about him in amazement.

Above him in the dark blue sky blazed a gigantic ball. He peered intently at it. It couldn't be! Yet there seemed to be the visible proof of it. That large ball floating so serenely in the sky above was the Earth. He could see the dim outlines of two continents on the surface in view, North and South America.

He sat there, too stunned to move. What and how had it happened?

Where was he?

He got to his feet again. And holding to the sides of the cab, he moved around to the front of the truck. There, he leaned against the radiator and looked about him.

The truck was parked on some sort of a highway. At least it was smoother than the ground immediately to the right and left of the truck. The road led straight ahead until it disappeared into the horizon. Pratt was quick to note the flatness of the surrounding countryside.

A speculative look came into his eyes and the strong tanned brow knit in thought.

"Now," he thought, "I don't know how I got here. But I'm reasonably sure of *where* I am. Unless the other planets have continents like those two I'm looking at. And I don't think so. So this is the moon! And to bear my theory out, the thinness of the air and the lack of gravity should be proof enough.

"Okay then. I'm on the moon. Me and a gas wagon loaded with thirty thousand gallons of high test. Now what?"

The last had been wrung from him as a strange, and confusing sound came to him. At first he thought it was the sound of a loon. Then as the sound came closer, he thought it was the high whine of an aeroplane motor.

It proved to be neither. Nor was it anything he was familiar with. Rolling toward him in the bright earth light, were a half-dozen strange creatures. They rolled up to within a few yards of the parked truck and stopped there. Then, to his amazement, the odd creatures straightened up and revealed themselves to be men. Or at least something which resembled men. There was a distinct and notable difference. They had four arms, two of which came from their

shoulders and the other two jutted from that part of their bodies just above the waist.

"Who are you?"

The words came to his ears. He looked about him. And heard again:

"Who are you?"

It was then he realized that these strange beings were speaking to him. Yet not speaking. For he didn't see them open their mouths.

"Thought waves. Answer!"

THEN HE got it. They didn't speak. They merely thought the questions. And somehow they were transmitted to him. He realized at the same instant that since such was the case, he had better control his thoughts. At least until he found out whether or not they were friendly.

Some sixth sense made him look closely at the group. There had been six of them. Now there were only four. And turning, he spied the other two rolling toward him from two directions. They were only a few feet off when he saw them. Then they were erect and on him. He only had time to glimpse a pair of the cruelest looking faces he had ever seen. Then he was thirty feet in the air in a gigantic leap which took him out of their path and far to one side. He saw them peer about in bewilderment. And heard the others think:

"There, fools! Over there."

And anger took hold of him. What right had they to attack him. He had given them no reason to.

"Okay, damn you," he whispered softly. "If it's a fight you want..."

Then he jumped again. He had seen that they were unarmed. And no one had ever denied Pratt Marsh lacked courage. In fact he was a little on the foolhardy side.

His leap almost put him on top of one of the moonmen. His fist lashed out and caught one of them on the

side of the neck. A look of awe came into Pratt's face at the handiwork of the blow. There had been a sharp, cracking sound and the one he hit left his feet in a great arching flight, to land ten feet away in a heap. Nor did it take more than one look to show Pratt that his blow had killed the stranger.

The other had turned at the same instant and wrapped his four arms around Pratt's middle. At the same time, the others, who had been waiting for just that to happen, doubled themselves up and came rolling forward to help.

Pratt twisted savagely about and went spinning around like a human top. The moonman's body rose, as if by levitation, until it was practically horizontal. Then, as Pratt continued to whirl in ten foot leaps, the moonman's body rose past the horizontal plane.

The moonman's face was only a few feet removed from Pratt's. And even as he went bounding about in his gravity defying leaps, Pratt had time to observe the other's face. Grey in color, the skin was flabby and fell in fleshy rolls across the cheekbones, like the dewlaps of a blood hound. The eyes, like a cat's, were all pupil, a mud colored brown. Then the other opened his mouth and Pratt drew back in horror. Slime-green teeth, each a sharp pointed bit of bone, protruded past the lips. And a fetid odor came from the parted lips.

It didn't take more than a few seconds. Pratt noticed that in spite of the fact the monster had four arms, their grip was rather weak. And when his terrific spin combined with centrifugal force, something had to give way. It was the moonman who did. Spread-eagled, he went shooting off to land with a skidding thud on the sand, directly in the path of his friends, rolling to his rescue.

WHIRLING, Pratt made for the truck in two immense jumps. Then he was in the cab and stepped on the starter. The motor caught with a muffled roar. He shifted, sub-consciously, before he remembered that the shifting lever was broken. His jaw went slack, as the mechanism meshed. And he was off in a cloud of dust.

He didn't know whether or not the hard packed surface he was riding on was a road. He only knew that it led away from these men who were obviously not friendly. The accelerator went clear to the floor board as he gave it all the gas it would take. Then, when he had put distance between him and the four-armed men, he relaxed and permitted his foot a more normal pressure.

His face reflected unconcern and he whistled through his teeth in his usual, untuneful manner. But his mind was busy in thought:

"All right, now, T. Pratt Marsh. We've got to figure this out. The phenomena of the levitation is something which at the moment must remain a mystery.

"The facts are these. To wit: one, while driving on U. S. 63, I was overcome by a strange blackout. Two, on my recovery I find myself in strange surroundings, presumably the moon. And why the moon? Because, unless my eyes deceive me, yonder planet is the earth. Three, the moon is inhabited. And four, ...what was that?"

Perplexity screwed his face into sour lines. The moon was inhabited all right. Another scream or sound similar to one had come to him. Again he braked the truck to a stop. His mind, occupied with the mystery of the present, was once more alert to his surroundings. And they differed from that which he had just left.

The flat, arid plain had given way

to a rolling verdant terrain. The belt of sand he was riding was a tan colored waist a hundred yards wide, set between the green of the countryside. To his right was a small stand of trees similar in shape and size to the familiar poplar. He cocked an ear in their direction. The sound had seemed to come from there. He waited for a few seconds to hear if it would be repeated, then just as he started the motor again, it rose into the thin air. And it was human. More, Pratt could have sworn it was a woman's voice!

The sound came from the depths of the trees. Then there burst into view, a woman, running in his direction as fast as she could. And immediately behind her, was the most gigantic man Pratt had ever seen.

HE ACTED by instinct. In an instant he was out of the truck. Under the seat was his truck jack. And it had a handle which could prove to be a murderous weapon. The heavy steel rod felt good, in the palm of his hand.

He stood for the barest second watching the chase: the woman, bare legs churning the grass and the lumbering giant behind her. Then he leaped forward in huge bounding steps to meet them.

He was still unaccustomed to the strange lack of gravity and over-jumped his mark. His last leap took him over the heads of the two. He looked downward at them as he past over their heads and saw that she was a beautiful—and well-formed girl. Then he was on the ground again and had turned to face the monstrous being. Behind him, he could hear the panting breaths of the girl.

He bent in a crouch and peered at the giant, trying to gauge the angle of attack. The giant waited for him, his huge body stooped, head bent for-

ward and eyes showing an animal bewilderment at the strange arrival of Pratt. Pratt waited for the other to make the first move. But the giant was too befuddled to do other than stand and look at Pratt.

Pratt became a bit tired of the tableaux created by their wariness. Stepping toward the other in slow, mincing steps, he came to within a few feet of the giant. And the something that had been bothering him at the back of his mind came clear to him now. This huge being facing him was like an animal insofar as intelligence was concerned.

One look at the beetle-brow, forehead sloping back until the eyebrows and forehead met the dull, animal-look in the eyes, told him that insofar as initiative was concerned, Pratt would have to make the first move. And behind him he heard the girls warning as he stepped in:

"Careful! Moglu has the strength of ten men!"

"Right," Pratt thought. "And the brains of a fly."

Then they were a few feet apart and suddenly Pratt moved like lightning. He had remembered what had happened when he struck the first man he had met on the moon and he had an idea that his fist would carry enough power for what was needed here. The giant still regarded him with the same puzzled look as Pratt moved in. Then, as the Earthman lashed out with his fist, the giant moved also. And with a speed that was amazing. One hand swept downward and caught Pratt's fist and the other circled his waist. And Pratt was lifted high in the air.

But Moglu only held the other close to him.

"No, my friend, not quite the brains of a fly," Moglu said softly.

Pratt's jaw dropped in surprise.

And Moglu grinned broadly at the expression on his captive's face.

"And now, what?" the soft voice of the giant taunted Pratt.

Pratt twisted madly in the other's grip but to no avail. Moglu only grinned and the arm around Pratt's waist tightened in inexorable pressure. Then Pratt drew back his right leg and kicked downward as hard as he could. The kick caught Moglu squarely on the kneecap. Gone was the stolid look in the eyes of the giant. And gone was the blankness of the face. Instead the giant's features grimaced in sudden pain. And he released Pratt as though he was a hot coal.

Pratt landed lightly and before Moglu could recover from the kick, Pratt kicked him on the other knee. And Moglu began to dance in pain, howling as he did so. And every time he landed, Pratt would kick him, saying:

"Yeah! The brains of a fly!"

PRATT WAS beginning to enjoy himself. But his enjoyment didn't last long. Moglu had been hopping up and down, to land first on one leg, then the other. And as he had landed, Pratt had kicked. Suddenly Moglu jumped, just as Pratt kicked and Pratt sprawled flat on his back when the kick missed its mark.

Before he could move, Moglu had leaped on him. And this time the giant's arms gripped like the coils of a boa constrictor. Pratt had one hand free. The other was held close to his side by Moglu's encircling grip. Pratt knew it would only be a matter of seconds before the giant's grip would crush the breath and life from his body. And with only one hand free there wasn't much he could do.

His breath whistled from between his lips in a thin piping whistle. His chest felt as if an unbearable weight

was pressing him into the earth. Slowly, as if in slow motion, Pratt brought his free hand up and fastened it into the shaggy beard of the face above him. And with his last remaining strength, he pulled Moglu close—and bit as hard as he could into the broad, fleshy nose, close to his own.

Once again, Moglu howled in pain. And released for a second the pressure of his grip. It was enough. Pratt wriggled free. And rolling swiftly to one side, managed to get to his feet before the other recovered.

But Pratt hadn't taken one thing into consideration. The distance he had rolled. When arose he saw that he was a good ten yards from Moglu. And although it took only a few seconds to get back, the giant had also regained his feet. Now they were as it was in the beginning.

Pratt was panting slightly, not only from his efforts but also from the effects of the lighter atmosphere. Moglu watched his approach with decided misgivings. Pratt's mind was no longer an open book. And he did not fight according to rules.

Pratt began a circling movement. To him it was at an ordinary pace but to the giant, Pratt was a whirling human top. No matter how fast Moglu moved to face the Earthman, he never quite succeeded. So that when Pratt leaped at last, Moglu had his back to him. And this time Pratt had a greater advantage than before.

Moglu's confidence had vanished.

Pratt landed full on the other's back. And while he encircled the giant with one hand, he held the other free. Then, disregarding Moglu's vicious maneuverings to displace him, Pratt swung several vicious blows to the shaggily bearded face. At first they seemed to have no effect. But as the iron-hard fist continued to land

with monotonous regularity on the same spot, the sum total of the blows finally beat Moglu.

Pratt felt the giant shudder, then with a suddenness that was startling, Moglu fell to the ground.

There was squealling sound from behind him and Pratt whipped around to face the new danger. And found his neck encircled by a pair of soft warm arms. And felt a pair of soft warm lips pressed against his. He drew back in sheer surprise. But as the girl continued to kiss him, he answered the caress. When at last they drew apart, Pratt had to admit it was the warmest reception he had had so far; and the most welcome.

He regarded the lovely, young face only a few inches from his and found himself comparing it with those he had known upon Earth. The Kates, Janes, Sallys and the rest he had known suffered by comparison. Suddenly she pouted.

"So you have kissed others," she said. Then she withdrew from his arms.

HE GAVE himself a mental kick. She had read his mind. But before he could answer, he became aware of another presence. Turning swiftly, he saw that Moglu had regained consciousness and was approaching.

Pratt was beginning to weary of this constant battling he had to do. Of course he knew that all he had to do was get back to the truck. But that would only leave the girl to her fate. And for all he knew, it might be one worse than death.

To Pratt's surprise, Moglu, when he had approached to within a few yards of the Earthman, went to his knees. And crawled the rest of the distance that way. When he arrived almost at Pratt's feet, he lifted his head and said:

"Do as you wish, mighty warrior. I am yours."

Pratt's mouth opened in surprise. Now what? Nor was the situation made any clearer when the girl also dropped to her knees and made the same announcement.

"Hey!" he yelped at this sudden strange turn in affairs. "What goes here?"

The two on their knees looked up at him in open-mouthed surprise. It was Moglu who answered:

"Why, it is quite simple. We are yours, as a sort of prize for your feat of arms in conquering me. And you must consider us your slaves."

"Now—wait—a—minute," Pratt drawled.

"...Really," Moglu continued. "You should not let your feelings, that is, your moral dis-inclination to accept the situation, interfere with the *status quo*. It has been all too apparent to us that you are a visitor from another world. As such we are deeply interested in you. But because we must behave in the manner which is the rule for our individual races, your reception at my hands could not have been any different than it was. However, it has all turned out for the best, since you succeeded in overpowering me. And speaking for myself, I am thankful that such is the case."

A pained expression came into Pratt's face. This—this *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, this atavism who would have fetched a top price at any Odditorium on Earth, to speak as he did was beyond Pratt's power to believe. It just couldn't be!

Moglu, tiring of his position and seeing that Pratt didn't seem to know what to do, took matters into his own hands. Arising, he started off in the direction of the gas truck. The girl also arose and followed him. Pratt, seeing that matters were get-

ting a little out of hand, also started for the truck.

He lagged behind, purposely, first, to gather his strayed wits; and to reason out what to do when they were all at the truck.

"Very interesting," Moglu was saying, as Pratt arrived. "Of course, you realize that all this is a mystery to us. Our knowledge of anything mechanical is at the best, superficial. And confined to the most simple of objects, such as the wheel and water clock. However, I can admire what is all too apparent in this vehicle's construction."

"Okay, professor," Pratt said sharply. "I'll take it from here."

"Splendid!" Moglu said benignly. "We await your tale with what can best be described as bated breath."

Pratt gave Moglu a sour look. And began:

"Only a short a time ago, I was driving on a desert highway on that planet." He pointed to the Earth. "Something happened and I find that I have been transplanted, truck and all, to the moon. Now, it's obvious that some force or power, operating from the moon..."

"Wait!" Moglu halted the tale.

PRATT'S glance should have shriveled the ten foot giant down to Pratt's size. But it only glanced off the dull, stupid looking countenance, as water from the rocks. If anything, Moglu bore a more animal looking appearance than ever.

"If you hold to the theory that the force which brought you here was man made, I can assure you that it is an erroneous conjecture," Moglu said. There was a trace of condescension in his manner. "Although our scientists have the *latent* mental ability to perhaps, and I say, perhaps, with a good deal of mental reservation, seeing that their pre-occupation with the

problems which..."

"Shut up!"

The girl, who had been following Moglu's words with an air of profound admiration, shrank back in alarm at Pratt's sudden, explosive command. As for Moglu, his eyebrows disappeared completely within the depths of the hair which started at his eyebrows.

"Shut up!" Pratt stormed in irritation. "And listen to me! First of all, who are you? And let the girl talk," he hastily said as he saw Moglu open his mouth.

"Why—" she hesitated. "I am Maeri."

"Well, go on," he prompted, when she paused after telling her name. "Tell me more. Where do you come from? Who are your people? Whom do I see about getting back?" The last, he realized, was a foolish query.

To his amazement, she burst into tears. Instinctively, he stepped forward and placed his arms about her shoulders. She nestled close into them. But the tears continued unabated.

"Now, listen," he said gently. "I didn't mean anything, that is, I..."

"Do you mind, Master," Moglu interjected softly.

Pratt turned and saw that the giant was smiling. And despite the prognosis cast to the jaw, the smile had a winning and gentle quality to it. Pratt nodded. But his arms remained close about the girl.

"I should have explained your situation," Moglu said. "After all, I realized from the very beginning that you were at a loss and the time would come when things would have to be cleared up for you. To come down to fundamentals. You and the vehicle you came in are now a permanent part, shall we say, of our life. It is obvious that you cannot return, since the how of your coming was due to an

unexplicable, natural causation.

"This is the planet, Luona. You term it, the moon. I am Moglu, the highest form of mental life on Luona. The girl is Maeri, one of the tribe of Lamats, who are the most prevalent type of people to be found on our planet. She is the daughter of the chief of the Stamat division of the Lamats. Now, as to our acquaintance with the language you speak..."

Pratt had shown surprise, just then. Moglu had obviously read his mind.

"...Actually," Moglu continued, "our language is universal. That is, all the people speak the same tongue. I can only surmise that your ability to speak it stems from some unexplained but natural reason. So with our power of reading thoughts. We all have that power. But only to a limited degree. But of that, later. I imagine that the important thing now, is to find out what your plans are. Just what are they?"

THE QUESTION, so bluntly asked, caught Pratt flat-footed. What were his plans? He sat on the running board. Maeri sat beside him, looking up into his features with a glance which so much as said, but of course you will get us out of this predicament.

Silence fell between them. The Earth had disappeared from view and a faint rosininess on the horizon heralded the break of a new day. The silence lengthened interminably. It was Moglu who broke it.

"The day is breaking," he said. "And we are not in friendly country. The city of the Stamats lies only a hundred mons* away. It is my suggestion that we go there. Efredi, Maeri's father, will make you welcome, for one thing. And another, because of the circumstances, you will be enabled to maintain a residence in Stamat."

*mon—a distance on Luona corresponding to an Earth mile.

Pratt understood what Moglu was driving at. He had rescued the girl, from what, he was still in the dark about. Or how it had come to be that she was being pursued. But he was sure that the giant would explain in due time. What was important, was as Moglu had said, they were in enemy territory and they had better scam from there.

He looked at the cab, reflectively, Moglu's immense bulk would never fit into its confines. But he could sit on the trailer tank, directly behind the cab, in such a way that his feet would rest upon the connecting rod. Then if Pratt lowered the rear mirror, they could talk.

Maeri watched, wide-eyed and wondering, Pratt's every move. The truck started jerkily and she held back a squeal of terror at the sudden movement. But as they began a smooth rolling down the hard packed sand, and nothing untoward happened, she became more at ease.

And Pratt became more uncomfortable.

He had noticed her state of undress. But at the time he had been busily engaged in other matters. Now her proximity was a matter of discomfort to him. He wondered if all the girls on Luona dressed in as little clothes as she. He gave her a second, hurried glance and turned quickly away. She was dressed in a sort of sarong which extended to her waist. Another bit of cloth only partly concealed the budding womanhood. Her skin was warm-looking and brown in color.

He looked once again into her face and found her eyes, two pools of hazel light, regarding him quizzically.

"You—like Maeri?"

"Um. Well...yes, I do."

Above them there was the sound of an ill-restrained chuckle. Moglu was

finding the conversation amusing.

"That is well," she said. "We have many customs, here, which will be foreign to you. Because of what happened, I am more than just a prize. I am..."

"Hold it!" Pratt hastily said. "We'll settle that when we see your father."

She shrugged her shoulders. After all, it wasn't going to make much difference whom they saw. The rules of Luona had to be observed.

"Turn right, here," the voice of the giant directed, as they entered a wooded area.

PRATT saw then that there was a fork in the road. He did as directed and found after riding for a few minutes that the forest was thinning out. Already, the sun was fairly high in the sky and the light showed Pratt that they were in a rolling, hilly land, rich in grass and flowers. Then they were out of the forest and approaching the crest of a hill, higher than most of the others. The truck nosed over the top.

And Pratt's foot stepped hard on the brake.

The girl gasped and shrank against his shoulder. Pratt could only stare, wide-eyed and rather curiously at what had confronted them. It was Moglu who both recognized their danger and gave the command to turn:

"Ekfoos!" his voice rumbled in warning. "Reverse the vehicle! Quick! Ah..."

But Pratt was too engrossed in the approaching wave of mounted men, to pay more than a superficial heed to Moglu's warning.

At first he thought they were Arabs. The resemblance to the camel-mounted Bedouins was startling. Then he saw that what he took to be camels, were a strange two-legged

beast. But in other respects the men were similar. Even in their dress, which consisted of an all-enveloping robe, like the Arab burnoose. And as they came close enough to be recognized, he saw that in their facial delineaments, the Arab and these were brothers.

Not until the first wave of mounted men were almost on them, did Pratt realize that these men intended harm. Then he saw bared swords, scimitar shaped, flashing in the sunlight. And knew from the wild shouts and features alive in the light of the approaching battle that their mission was not of peace.

"Lay flat on the top," he shouted to Moglu. Then shoving the girl to the floor, he put the truck into gear.

And drove directly into the first wave of mounted men!

Whatever their expectations, they certainly didn't expect him to do what he did. The truck plowed through them like a bowling ball coming in for a pocket hit. Animals screamed in pain. The men's faces contorted in fear and anger, as they fell from their mounts. They had almost won through the last wave, when the truck's motor went out with a stuttering sound.

Pratt pounded frantically at the starter. There was a grinding, coughing sound from the truck's innards. But that was all.

Savage faces peered into the cab. Savage voices spit expletives at the terrified occupants. There were shouts, exultant, excited, from behind, somewhere. Pratt heard Moglu give voice to his bull-like bellow of rage. Then there came the sound of a scuffle and a thud, as of some heavy body falling to the sand.

There was the sudden commanding shout of a voice from the window at the girl's side and a new face appeared at the window. Smoulder-

ing brown eyes, savage in lust, peered in at them. A nose, curving as the scimitar blade dominated the cruel face. Lean-fleshed, talon fingers reached in and pulled at the girl. And Pratt went berserk!

DESPITE THE narrow confines of the cab, he lashed out in a vicious straight arm at the sneering visage. The blow caught the man high on the cheek bone and parted the skin as neatly as though Pratt's fist was a surgeon's scalpel. The blow also sent the other spinning from the truck as if he'd been hit by a pile driver.

Voicing incoherent threats, Pratt leaped from the truck and disregarding the swords and the overpowering difference in numbers, charged in headlong attack. He was a whirling cyclone and almost as savage and damaging. Ekfoos went spinning away from the pounding fists and kicking feet as though they had been caught up in the path of a whirlwind. Pratt knew only this.

That he was a peace loving man. And ever since his arrival on the moon, he had been at almost continuous struggle against someone. First, the weird men whose locomotion was to roll like a child's hoop. Then Moglu. Now these! Well, he'd show them how an Earthman fights.

For a few seconds he was able to fight in close where his superior speed and agility were advantages they could not overcome. Then they became aware of that fact. And ran from him. To form a circle about him. A circle of steel! Their swords were like the bars of a cage against which he knew it was hopeless to rage.

Then, from the other side of the truck, there came the muted cry of the girl, her voice rising in protest and ending on a note of terror. Pratt

took in the situation in a single glance. The nearest men were about ten feet removed. Their gloating looks showed their joy at what they thought would be his end. A carcass, spitted on the end of someone's blade.

Bending until he was almost double, Pratt started at a run for the group nearest the truck. He took short, quick steps. Then, when he was only a few feet away, he took a tremendous leap, clearing not only the men but the truck as well.

He saw then, when he landed on the other side what had made Maeri cry out as she did. A burnoose savage held her in his grip. She was bent almost double and he was tearing at her upper garment. And surrounding them were a dozen men, laughing aloud at her predicament, pounding each other's shoulders at the spectacle.

In a single bound, he was at their side and his fist had landed with bone crushing force against her attacker's jaw. The man left his feet and flew into some of those watching, sending them to the ground also. Pratt noticed that he did not arise with the rest. The girl sank to the ground, shielding her half naked body with trembling fingers. He stood over her straddle-legged and waited the onslaught of the Ekfoos. He knew it was a hopeless situation. There were hundreds of them. Already, the thirty or forty men he had seen were augmented by several times that number, in just a few seconds.

Maeri looked up at the snarling, unafraid face above her and was filled with a queer, sudden feeling that all would turn out well. Such courage could not go unrewarded. Then she thought of the laws of Luona and felt a natural fear for him. It was kill or be killed in such a sit-

uation. That was the law!

Savage eyed and unafraid, Pratt faced them. His mind told him that there was no way out. And he saw from their looks that it was so. Now they were coming in for the kill. Voices from the outskirts of the mob warned those nearest to watch for his leaps—watch that they did not come too close!

And a bull-bellow boomed:

"Alive! I want that man alive!"

THE MOB parted and a man stepped forward. One look at the way his arrival was greeted and Pratt knew he was the leader of the Ekfoos. And justly so by his appearance alone. A full seven feet high, his magnificent figure was robed in a burnoose of rainbow hue. A naked blade was thrust through the belt of his robe. He advanced until he and Pratt were only a yard apart.

Pratt's eyes narrowed in speculation at the close view of the man. Power, determination, cruelty were writ large on this man's countenance. And more. For in the dark, narrow-set eyes was to be seen intelligence also.

The thin slash of his mouth tightened into even crueler lines, as he saw the girl.

"What have we here?" he asked.

Pratt straightened from the fighting crouch he had assumed and answered in biting terms:

"What was the idea of all this? Where do you get the idea that you can attack people—that you..."

"Who are you? And who is this girl?" hawk-face asked, breaking into Pratt's diatribe.

"My name is Theodore Pratt Marsh. And this girl is Maeri, daughter of the chief of Stamats. But that's neither here nor there. I want..."

"Enough! No one asks anything of At-tu!" He gave the truck a close

look of inspection, walking around it and coming back to Pratt after he was through, continued:

"What is this thing? How does it go?"

Pratt bit his lips in vexation. There was no doubt that the truck was to these people as the phonograph was to the first natives to see it in darkest Africa, a thing of black magic. And a thought came to him. If it worked...

"This," Pratt began, his voice taking on a rich, fruity tone, "is the chariot which brought me from another world."

At-tu was puzzled.

"Chariot? Another world? You speak in riddles. Wait... I know! It is the work of the Hammars! You are their emissary. Take him, men! Alive!"

And before the stunned Pratt could do more than lift his hands in futile defense, he was overwhelmed. Twenty bodies bore him to the ground. Fists lashed at him. Fingers tore at him. All his struggling was unavailing. From somewhere in the voluminous robes, they brought forth rope, with which they bound him.

He lay on the ground and looked his defiance at At-tu. At-tu paid not the slightest heed to him. Stepping to the girl who had been at the bottom of the heap and had been knocked unconscious by a blow, he pulled at her hair, bringing her face, pale in its stunned coma, to a close view.

"Hhm...daughter of Komu. She'll bring a fancy price. That is if I decide to return her. Toat!"

A villainous looking man appeared from the farthest edge of the crowd gathered around the two. Shifty eyes blinked up at At-tu. A flaccid mouth twisted in twitching words:

"Aye, Master?"

"Have these carrion brought to my city. And see to it the man does not escape. Give the girl to the women in my compound. And say, that she must be made ready for my return."

"Aye, Master! Here knaves," he shouted to some of the men.

Four of them stepped forward and lifted Pratt and the girl to two of the strange animals. Then they bound them to the saddle-like arrangement on the animals' rump. And after Toat and the four he had designated had mounted, they made off in the same direction from which they'd come.

At-tu watched their departure with brooding eyes. But he had already forgotten them. He had more important things on his mind. The conquest of Luona!

PRATT HAD begun to wonder how long this ride was going to last. Long ago, his flesh had chafed where the rope or whatever it was that held him prisoner, had bit into his skin. Now, every jolting stride of the animal's gait made him grit his teeth and clench his lips to prevent him from crying aloud. Toat, riding alongside watched him with gleeful relish. And every now and then voiced a gibe:

"So! How does it feel, dog of a Hammar? Soon, you'll know a greater agony. Keep a stiff lip. The hero a craven will be soon as the tipped lash strikes—for the hundredth time."

Pratt grinned in spite of his pain. He recognized Toat for what he was, a jackal, trailing the lion, knowing after the feast there would be something for him. But in Pratt's heart there was the growing conviction that the fire was going to be hotter than the frying pan. If it weren't for the girl... But it was too late for recriminations and hopeless to speculate on what the future held.

Maeri rode just ahead of Toat and

Pratt. She had regained consciousness just after they had started off. Not by a single sign had she shown her awareness of Pratt, directly behind her. She seemed steeped in a misery too great for her to be interested in anyone else. Either that, or indifferent to their fate.

Their mounts rode free, without halter. And at terrific speed. Pratt gave his a thorough inspection. More like a bird than anything else, it had a head that was devoid of hair. A neck, long and muscular made Pratt think of an ostrich. But the hooves were cloven and there were no wings.

Then, just when the flesh could no longer bear the agony of chafing, the ride ended. They had ridden up the crest of a hill and before them stretched the city of At-tu.

Their mounts stood still on the hilltop. And in that interval of stillness, Pratt took in the situation. He had expected something different from what he saw. A city to him, was a collection of stone or brick homes. This, however, was a city of tents. Great, rainbow-striped affairs, they stretched across the whole width of the valley in which the city was laid.

Whoever had planned the city had done so with an eye for its defense. On three sides it was surrounded by sheer-walled escarpments. The only entrance, as far as Pratt could see, was down the gentle slope of this hill they were on. Despite his predicament, he found it in him to admire what he saw. Yet he could not understand why, after making certain that the city was impregnable to assault on three sides, the fourth was left open in this manner.

His muscles contracted in painful reminder of his condition and he flexed them in a sudden, strong move. And felt the bonds give slightly. His face became a blank mask

of flesh. Only his eyes showed the inner excitement he felt. He railed at himself for not having tested the strength of the ropes, before. Now it was too late. For Toat and the others had begun the descent of the hill.

PRATT'S MOUNT moved with a dainty, careful, high-stepping manner. As if it were walking on ground carpeted with eggs. Pratt turned and observed the rest and saw that their mounts were also moving in the same manner. Then he realized in a sudden flash of inborn knowledge, the reason for it. Although it was hidden from human eyes, and perhaps only found through the animal sense of these strange creatures, they were moving on an invisible path.

The ground looked alike, everywhere. Then, one of the two-legged beasts stumbled. It was for the barest second. But in that second, the animal stepped off the path. And sank up to its fetlocks in the ground. Its mouth opened but no sound came from the distended throat. The rider, his face contorted in horror, leaped from the animal's back. And sank, also into the ground. If the animal was dumb, the human was not. Unutterable agony limbed the features. His lips contorted into the most awful expression of pain, Pratt had ever seen. While from the man's throat came shrieks of pure agony.

Slowly, the man and beast sank into the ground. And to Pratt's nostrils came the unmistakable odor of burning flesh. Louder and louder grew the man's shrieks as he sank lower into the mire of hidden flames. Steam arose from around the close held bodies. Pratt felt the cold sweat break over him. He looked around him and saw that, although the others were also aware of what had

happened, not one made any move to rescue the man.

The man was now up to his hips in the ground. And he no longer shrieked as before. His voice had dwindled to a whimpering, animal sound. Then Pratt saw the man's eyes roll upward, horribly and he gave voice to a single, last shriek of despair. And was silent, forever.

Yet Pratt found that he was more horrified at the beast's agony than he was at the man's. For it was evident that the beast was dumb. And could only show his agony through his eyes. Pratt knew that the sight of the dumb animal's dying struggles, would remain with him forever. He looked back once more, just as they reached level ground, but all that met his eye was the hummocks and humped grass.

Just before they reached the first line of tents which lay in a great circle of cleared land, they came to a moat about a hundred feet across. A narrow, wooden bridge was the only means of crossing the moat. Just beyond the moat, the first row of gaily colored tents stood. They rode across the bridge in single file.

At first sound of their mount's hooves on the wood, a great crowd of people came pouring forth from the tents in the immediate vicinity. And when they saw that two of the animals bore captives, shrieks of joy came from the throats of the assembled watchers.

Pratt saw that most of the crowd were women. But never had he seen such savagery as was displayed on the countenances of these women. Four of the guards moved in to surround the girl, as they rode in among the crowd. But Pratt was permitted to ride unescorted. It was not until they were well into the crowd of women and children, that he realized why they had formed a

cordon about the girl.

THE GUARDS had drawn their sabers. But the crowd leaped forward in the face of the weapons and tried to reach the girl. The guards beat at them with the flat of their swords. But in spite of that, the crowd seemed intent on getting to the girl and from what he saw, tear her to pieces. Then they saw Pratt. And saw, too, that he was unprotected.

Their savage, hateful faces shown with joy, as they ran to him. Toat reined his mount in behind Pratt and watched the crowd's approach with grinning mouth. Pratt braced himself for their onslaught.

Then they were on him. Taloned fingers tore at his clothes, claw-like fingers raked at the skin on face and hands. In a few seconds half the clothes he wore had been torn from his body. His face was a welter of scratches from the clawing fingers. And no matter how he twisted in vain effort to escape their clutches, some of them managed to get to him. He began to wonder how long this was going to keep up. For new arrivals came from every section of tents they passed. It was a gamut he had to go through.

But just when he thought that surely this was the end, Toat shouted for them to, "go back to their cooking and whelps. This is At-tu's prisoner."

Pratt's head hung in weariness. His body ached intolerably. It seemed that every nerve, muscle and bone had been torn from its moorings. He was only barely aware that they had reached their goal. He lifted his head and saw that they had paused before the largest tent he had ever seen. Fully two stories high, it stretched for a good twenty yards in diameter.

Maeri was lifted from her mount and carried into the tent. Then after a moment, the men came out and mounting again, rode down the narrow passage that was the street between the rows of tents. This time their journey was short. They came to an open space on which had been placed a wooden enclosure.

Toat rapped with the hilt of his sword at the gate which barred entrance. It swung wide and Pratt and Toat rode within. The gate swung shut behind them. Pratt looked about him with dazed eyes. He saw a half dozen of the now familiar tents, placed in such a way that they were several yards removed from the high, wooden fence. Armed guards patrolled the areaway between the tents. And were stationed also at regular intervals all along the wooden barrier.

"What have we here?" a thin, high-pitched voice cackled.

"Meat—for the pot," Toat answered. The words were meaningless to Pratt. But the old man who had let them in went into a fit of laughter at the words, laughter in which Toat joined. Then he turned and rode through the gate.

"Ho, guards!" the old man cried.

Two of them came running at the command.

"Number three tent," the old man said.

Pratt was lowered from his animal and set upon his feet. The guards cut his bonds. And he promptly fell to the ground. They looked at him in silence for a second, then one of them brought his foot back and booted Pratt in the side. He tried to roll from the kick but his muscles refused to answer to the mind's command. Once again the guard kicked. But Pratt only lay supine under the kicks. The other

joined in the sport.

"Let them," Pratt thought. "It's as good a way to die as any."

But the old man had other ideas.

"Enough," he cried. But his eyes gleamed in enjoyment at the rare sport he was watching. "Carry the dolt, else he dies before we have our use of him."

THEY LIFTED him, amidst uproarious laughter and carried him the few yards to the tent the old man had designated. They threw him in as if he were a sack of bones. Nor did they turn to see whether he was alive or dead.

For a long time Pratt lay quiet, not alone because he was husbanding his strength, but also because to move even in the slightest degree was agony. Gradually the pain passed. And with it his mind came out of the daze it had been in. His senses stirred and he became aware of his surroundings—and companions.

He had been aware, but dimly, that he was not alone in his prison. Now that his mind was clear he rolled over and sat up. Sunlight filtering through the tent-cloth showed him that the tent held two others beside himself. One was a giant similiar in appearance to Moglu. The other was a young man about his own age. He had a lean, strong-boned face, hungry looking and savage-eyed. The mouth however was wry in its expression.

"The pot will be full, Moglu" the young man said.

The giant, his head thrown back, laughed long and hard at what the other had said. His laughter at end, he said:

"Aye. Meat is cheap in Luona." And burst into another laugh.

Pratt looked from one to another

in perplexity. Their talk didn't make sense. But then nothing made sense on this planet. He was sure of one thing, however. That whatever they were laughing at was not good. And that he had better start doing something about it. He remembered that his bonds had felt loose when he had suddenly tensed his muscles. Perhaps..

He held his body loose; then put all his muscle against the tightly binding ropes. He felt them give slightly. Once more he strained to the full power of the flesh's enduring. And felt the rope part from about his arms and body. The young man gasped at Pratt's display of phenomenal strength. And even the giant looked his amazement.

Pratt stood up and shook himself free of the ropes. Then he walked over to the others and gripping each of their bonds between his fingers, tore them free. For a few seconds there was silence broken now and then by smothered gasps as the circulation was returned to almost nerveless muscles and flesh.

The Earthman watched them, sober-eyed. Then when he saw that they had regained the use of their members, he said:

"Think you can do anything besides talk now that you're free?"

The hard-eyed moonman flushed at the words.

"You have great strength and courage," he said grudgingly. "But it will take more than that to set us free of this trap."

Pratt squatted beside the two. He gave the tent a casual yet all-inclusive glance.

"It doesn't look too tough, the way I see it," he remarked.

The two moonmen went tense at his words. What did he mean?

"Look," Pratt explained. "I don't

know what's beyond this enclosure. But all that's out there, is maybe six or seven men. Between the three of us—and the rest of the prisoners, we should be able to take care of them. It's already night. In a few minutes it'll be completely dark. At least enough for our purpose. Wait," he said as the young fellow started to interrupt. "Explanations can wait until we get out of here. If we don't they won't be necessary."

The other saw Pratt's point of view. He nodded soberly.

"As you say," he agreed. "Explanations can wait. More, if we go free, they won't be asked. And you will have earned my gratitude. One thing..you are a stranger here?"

"Yes."

"Then allow me to take the lead."

"Okay by me. Just one thing. There was a girl with me. If we get out, we've got to get to Maeri."

"Maeri!" the name burst from the young man's lips with the explosive force of a shot. "Is she here?"

PRATT WAS taken aback by the other's sudden action. The moonman had come erect and was standing over Pratt like a vengeful God. His anger was so intense, he was quivering with it.

"Yes," Pratt said slowly. "Do you know her?"

"My sister," the other said. "At-tu dared to profane her. I'll have his blood for it."

"You'll have to share it with me," Pratt said. And his eyes were hooded in sudden, implacable hate.

As one the two started toward the flap.

"Hold," Moglu said suddenly. The giants brow was furrowed in concentration. Then the wrinkles smoothed out and he said:

"My brother has a message for

his master. He has been left alone with the vehicle. He feigned death and after the Ekfoos departed ran off to hide. Now he wants to know how he can assist?"

Pratt smacked his palm with a clenched fist. Damn! If only Moglu knew how to drive. And the giant in the tent said:

"It is not so difficult. Merely think your instructions. He will follow them."

Pratt's eyes widened. Of course! He had forgotten their ability to sense telepathic messages.

"Wait for my instructions," his mind flashed the command.

The giant then arose and joined the other two at the tent flap. Pratt spread the cloth, cautiously. A lone warrior stood just beyond the shadow of the tent. His back was toward them. He leaned against the shaft of a long spear. His head was bent forward, cheek resting on the shaft end. There was no one else to be seen.

Pratt stole out of the tent with infinite caution. Like shadows, the other two came at his heels. They were but a few feet from the slumbering guard when some sixth sense awoke him. He acted with amazing speed. But as fast as he was, Pratt was faster. Before the other had half completed the turn in their direction, Pratt had leaped for him. And in that leap almost lost his life. For when the guard turned, he brought his spear to a position of accouchment. And the broad, gleaming head met Pratt's flying leap. To the two behind Pratt, it looked like the spear had passed completely through his body. Then they saw Pratt's arm come up and encircle the guard's throat. And saw the other clamp tight against the mouth of the guard.

There was the sharp, cracking sound of bone breaking and the

guard went limp in Pratt's grasp. It was the only sound which had been made.

Pratt pulled the spear from his shirt. It had passed through without touching the flesh.

"All right, mister. You take it from here."

Maeri's brother looked hastily around. There was neither sound nor sight of living thing. To their right, the dark bulk of a half dozen tents loomed. To their left was an open area perhaps twenty yards across. And beyond that, the gate. He turned right.

THEY STOLE along the walls of the tents. When they reached the farthest one, Maeri's brother paused. The other two came close.

"Jama-at, my father's Hafa* was taken to this tent," he whispered. "And with him were five of the best warriors in Stamat. Even without weapons, they will avail against these carrion."

Pratt wanted to ask how come with weapons, they were taken prisoner, but decided to hold his peace.

Maeri's brother parted the flap and whispered softly:

"Jama-at! It is I, Laeri."

Pratt heard the muffled sound of voices. Then five forms stole from the tent. He saw then that they were strong looking, big men, dressed exactly alike in leather shorts and shirt which covered their breasts. The biggest of them came close to Laeri and said:

"How did you affect your escape? I saw you and the Moglu bound."

Laeri explained in a few words. Jama-at clasped Pratt's hand in a tight squeeze and said:

"I am yours to command. Ask what you will."

*Hafa—Commander of Komu, the chief of the Stamat's forces.

"Are any of the others armed?" Pratt asked.

Jama-at shook his head.

"If we had been armed," Jama-at explained somewhat sadly, "there would not have been any of us left alive to take prisoner."

"Well," Pratt said to himself. "You ask a silly question and you get the right answer."

Jama-at turned to Laeri, then and said:

"I see you have a spear. A beginning anyway. Well, there are four more of us, I think, in the fourth tent. Who else is prisoner of At-tu's, I don't know, but whoever they are will be more than willing to risk escape than the pot."

Again the pot. Pratt noticed that the word had a sinister connotation. But what it was, was a mystery to him. He shrugged his shoulders and turned to the rest. They were silently looking toward the tent in which the rest of Jama-at's men were incarcerated. It was then Pratt noticed an odd feature of the tent in question. Where all the other tents had their opening toward them, this one either had no opening, or it was at the other end.

The Earth had risen above the horizon and was shedding a light upon them that was almost as bright as that of the sun. For an instant, he wondered what was taking place upon that distant planet which had been his home. Then, as Jama-at started toward the tent which was their goal, all thoughts of Earth and home were erased. Something told Pratt that all was not as serene as they imagined.

Between each tent was an areaway of about ten feet. They passed the first of the tents on their way to the one in which the rest of the men were, when they crossed the space

between two tents. Before they could do more than stare open-mouthed at the men who swarmed out at them, half of them were stretched on the ground, either wounded or dead. But their surprise was only momentary.

They they struck back, savagely, with all the inspired daring and strength of lost men.

Pratt was a ravaging avenger, scourging whoever came in his path, for the ignominies he had suffered at the hands of all who had attacked him since his arrival on the moon. He had learned to gauge and allow for, the difference in gravity. He no longer leaped in wild jumps, but moved swiftly and surely to his goal. And those incredibly swift movements played havoc with the slower moonmen. As if that wasn't enough, he struck blows too fast for them to parry, even with sword or spear.

ALONE, HE accounted for ten of them. But the odds were too great. The whole compound had been aroused by the cries, shrieks, groans and bellows of the guards. Pratt and those with him fought silently. Somehow, Jama-at, Laeri and Moglu had seized weapons. They stood in a sort of rough triangle, shoulder to shoulder. Pratt, because of his greater advantage in speed and strength, ranged the length of the battle area.

The spear that was his weapon was dyed red for half its length, red from the blood it had bathed in. Nor was he unscathed. There were more than just a few nicks in his skin. Luckily, they were all minor wounds. Not so lucky were those with whom he'd come in contact. Dead and dying strewn the ground.

Suddenly the gate opened and into the arena came charging a veritable horde of warriors. Pratt took a single

look, then dashed to the side of his friends. Men fell before the mad onslaught of his spear, used now as a club, like ten pins on a strike hit.

Jama-at's eyes gleamed in wild delight as he came among them.

"Ho!" he cried in a great voice. "Mine eyes have seen the greatest of warriors, this night. Death will be sweet, at your side."

Laeri and Moglu were silent but their eyes showed their respect.

The knot of warriors before them broke at the sound of a shouted command:

"Hold!"

It was At-tu!

Roughly shouldering aside those who were nearest to Pratt, he faced the four, on his face a sour look. He looked at the four men, then looked aside at the carnage their arms had created. Once again he looked at them.

"It is luck, indeed, that there were not more of you. I would have come back to an emptied village. Bah! And these call themselves warriors!"

He kicked at one of those who was pressed close to him. The kick sent the man scurrying. Having vented his spleen, At-tu turned once again to Pratt and his new-found friends and said:

"Well, since you are free, I am saved the business of seeking you. This is the night of the feast of Ramad. Laeri—Jamat—Moglu—stranger of iron...your choice! Slavery—or the pot!"

The four who were prisoners looked at each other. Pratt, with a question on his lips, the others showing only resolve. Even the ape-like face of Moglu showed the same courage and determination as the rest.

Maeri's brother suddenly remembered that Pratt was a stranger to what had been asked of them. He turned and started to unfold the mys-

tery, but stopped as Pratt said:

"It's all right, Laeri. I'll go along with the rest."

At-tu grinned, then. But there was little of humor in the lip's twisted movement.

"Good. Then there is no need to delay the ceremony. Some of you collect the rest of the prisoners." The last was said to his men who immediately followed his command.

IN A moment there were twenty odd men standing about the brightly lit open space. There was much laughter and shouting among At-tu's followers. In the confusion and hubub, Moglu managed to whisper to Pratt: "Now! It's your only chance to reach my brother. None here can intercept the message. Tell him what you will. And if this thing between you can save us, summon him."

It was as if Pratt became two people then. One, a corporeal body moving with the rest toward the doom At-tu had decreed, the other commanding and directing Moglu, wherever he was, to his will.

"Can you hear me, Moglu?" his mind asked.

"Aye," came the silent answer.

"Where are you?"

"Within the little hut where you and the girl were sitting."

"Good! Now on the...wait a minute. How did you manage to get that bulk of yours into the cab?"

Pratt actually *felt* Moglu stutter:

"Why—er—I must admit it was a tight squeeze. But after a moment I saw that I was too large. So. . ."

"So?"

"So I tore a hole in the roof."

Pratt had to grin as he got a mental picture of Moglu, the upper part of his torso jutting from the torn roof-top, like a caricature of a Hansom cab driver.

"No matter," he said forgiving the

trespass. "On the panel in front of you are several bits of metal, attached to a linked bit of chain. One of these bits of metal is sticking in the panel. Turn it to the right."

He waited until Moglu announced he had done so.

"Now, just below the bits of metal is a lever. Turn it to the right also. Do you hear a sort of purring sound? Good. That means the motor is on. On the floor beside your right foot are two pedals. If you press the one on the right the truck will begin to move. The deeper you press, the faster the truck will move. That pedal is the gauge by which you judge the speed at which you move. The wheel close to your belly is the steering apparatus. If you turn it to the left, the truck will go left. To the right, it will go right. That is all that I can tell you. The rest is up to God."

There was a silence for a short interval. Then Pratt remembered that Moglu knew everything...but where to go. And as if in answer came the thought from Moglu:

"Don't worry. I will get there as speedily as possible."

Pratt sent up a silent prayer that Moglu would not fail them. Somehow, he had a feeling of the deepest optimism. But when he regarded their surroundings and realized that they had arrived at their destination, his heart sank down into his boots.

SO GREAT had been his concentration in getting what he wanted across to Moglu, he had not been consciously aware of the passing of time and place. Now his senses stirred and awakened, brought into sharp focus by the strangeness of his surroundings.

The prisoners and their guards, followed by what appeared to be most of the populace, had arrived at a cleft

in the hills behind the great encampment of tents. In effect it was a shallow valley, skirted by the steep-sided hills. Within this valley was a great, circular place, like a gigantic earthen well.

Drawn up before the great depression was a large body of armed and blood-lusting soldiery. Ranks of them, three deep, had formed into a funnel-like neck through which the prisoners had to pass. At the end of the funnel were drawn up a number of unarmed men, At-tu at their head.

Pratt, Laeri, Jama-at and Moglu were the first to reach At-tu and the others with him. As the last of the prisoners came before him, At-tu gave a signal to the soldiers who immediately pressed close to the prisoners, hemming them in to prevent any attempt at escape. Then At-tu lifted his arm as a signal for silence. The huge, laughing throng, vibrant with excitement, became still at the gesture.

"My people!" At-tu's voice was a stentorian command for their attention. "This is the night of Ramad! It has been the age-old custom that on this night all who have been taken prisoner shall have their choice: slavery or the pot! And to those who accept the challenge of the pot, freedom and sanctuary for those who escape."

Laeri, standing close beside Pratt grunted a soft:

"Choice! Never in the memory of men, has anyone escaped."

"...There, prisoners, is the pot. The means of escaping are of your own choice," At-tu said, speaking directly to them.

He stepped back and the men whom Pratt had noticed were unarmed, stepped forward and began a mumbo-jumbo chant. As they chanted, they first faced the depression then turned their eyes upward to the Earth. Every time they raised their heads upward,

they intoned, "Ramad!"

Pratt followed their gaze and saw that tonight, at this time, the continent of Europe was to be seen. A cluster of pinpoint lights were to be seen on the upper west side of the continent. An instant's calculation told him those lights were the city of London.

London! That great, civilized city, two hundred thousand miles away, teeming with... Pratt shook himself free of the despondency which had seized him on seeing the presumed city. His eyes narrowed and his chin set in stubborn lines. Despite what Laeri had said, hope still rode strong in his breast. There was still Moglu. The unseen, hidden danger of the pot was a phantasm created to frighten them into panic, he thought.

The priests, finished with their unintelligible intonings, retired to the background. At-tu stepped back also. Then the soldiers pressed forward relentlessly, their bared spears and swords held close against the hindmost prisoners, compelling them to move forward against those in front. In this manner the front rank, Pratt and his friends, were forced to the very lip of the depression.

SOMEHOW, Pratt was maneuvered into being the first on the edge. The bright glow of the Earth showed him the pit they were facing, in all its immenseness. It was a circular affair, thirty feet across and about the same depth.

"The ladder!" At-tu called out. "Use it to descend."

Pratt saw then that a ladder had been affixed against the straight side of the pit. He turned and descended without an instant's hesitation. The others followed with as little hesitation as Pratt.

For some reason which Pratt attributed to instinct, he did not ven-

ture beyond the wall of the pit. Laeri, Jama-at and Moglu moved in beside him. But some of the others, seeing that nothing had happened after they arrived on the floor of the pit, moved toward the center.

Then Pratt saw repeated the drama which had taken place when Toat and the others had brought him to the tented city. The ground, which looked so firm was the same sort of quagmire that existed on the gentle slope. It also had the same qualities. The first to venture on the ground beyond the wall sank to his knees in the soft ground. And from about the flesh there arose a slender column of steam. The man shrieked once, a shriek that was echoed by the multitude gathered above. Theirs however, was one of unholy joy. The pot had found its first victim.

Nor was he alone in finding the hidden morass. At least ten more had followed him onto the thin earth surface and like him, were floundering below the thin sheath of protecting earth.

Instinctively, Pratt pressed closer to the protection of the wall. His eyes could not take themselves away from the unavailing struggles of those men. Beyond the first stricken cry, none of the others uttered a sound. Yet it was all too apparent that courage was not going to be enough. Further, the single apparent means of escape had been removed, the instant the last of them had set foot in the pit. For when Pratt, searching desperately for an exit looked to where the ladder had been, he saw it was no longer there.

No wonder they called it, the pot! The men were literally being boiled alive! A carnal odor arose from their half-hidden bodies.

"Look!" Laeri cried.

They turned their faces as one, in the direction he was pointing. Not all of them had found the boiling pit be-

low the surface. Two men were pressed close against the wall at the opposite end of the circular pit.

There was a means of getting across!

Pratt made an inventory of the group on their side of the pit. Twelve men were on the comparatively safe side. But in the final analysis, how safe were they? Pratt figuring desperately for the way out saw that if there was a way, it would have to be at the opposite end.

To get to the other end, however, they had to cross the hidden morass. He didn't have to be told that At-tu would not provide any means toward keeping them alive. It was going to be entirely up to them.

"Wait here!" Pratt commanded.

Sticking close to the wall, he began a cautious circling of their prison. Once his light step felt the earth give and he froze into stillness. But it was only a soft spot and just at that point. Beyond it was safety. He skipped lightly over the danger area. Not until he reached the others at the opposite end did he feel safe.

Pratt's tightly drawn features relaxed slightly, when he had time to survey the situation. He was even able to grin. At-tu's trap would soon be sprung. And unless At-tu was a liar, they were as good as free. For a single look had told Pratt that the side he was on was more vulnerable to escape than the opposite end.

THE WALL itself was less smooth, for one thing and for another, shrubs and small rocks projected from the sides, to permit hand and foot-holds. He called the rest to join him. He wondered, however, at the shouts of the watching mob. There was a note of laughter in their voices. The business at hand was more important, at the moment, than the shouts of those above.

Pratt took the lead nor was there any question in the minds of the others that it was not right that he should do so. A thick-branched shrub hung a few feet over his head. Warily, he looked at it for a moment, as if he thought it was some kind of trap placed there deliberately to entice him. Then taking his courage in hand, he leaped lightly for it. It bent for the barest instant beneath his weight, then held!

From then on it was a simple matter of climbing, using the rocks and shrubs as rungs in a ladder. Within the space of several minutes they had all reached the level ground above the pit. A great cheer rang out as the last of the prisoners reached safety. A derisive cheer.

They looked about them curiously. From the opposite end of the pit, it looked as though the cliffs were a long way from the edge. Now they saw that there was a distance of perhaps fifteen feet from the edge to where the cliffs began their smooth and steep-sided climb. They were no longer worried about the cliffs. All they had to do was walk around the rim and to the other end and they were free.

Shouts rang out:

"Over here!"

"This way!"

"Come ahead. You've made it!"

And once again, Pratt detected that note of derision in their voices. Instantly, he made up his mind. Something was wrong!

"Wait men! Let's look around, first."

But only Jama-at, Laeri and Moglu heeded his advice. The rest ran around the rim, some on one side, the others around the opposite end. All met the same fate! They hadn't progressed more than ten feet in either direction, when the ground literally ate them up. This time there was no gradual

disappearance. They disappeared instantly. Little puffs of smoke marked where their bodies had sunk from view.

It was then that the four who remained noticed the bones. Skeleton shapes strewn the ground to either side of where they stood. Nor did they have to search far for the reason. These bones were all that was left of those who had elected to stay. A bitter smile played around Pratt's mouth. So that was why the crowd had shouted so derisively. There was a way of escaping the pot. But only to land in the fire. Only this time the fire was above the pot.

The four looked at each other in consternation. For a second, indecision swayed Pratt. He *knew* he could escape! It was only the human impulse, that the fit shall survive, which had given him pause. He knew that with the fifteen feet of run which he had, it would be a simple matter to leap the pit. And knew, also, that At-tu would keep his word. Yet, these men were now his friends. He had to devise some means of effecting their escape also.

THE THREE moonmen squatted on their heels. Pratt thrust his hands into his pockets. He felt the package of cigarettes and pulling it out, lit up. Exclamations of wonder fell from their lips at his strange act. But Pratt had become transformed. Gone was the bitter look, the drawn expression. Moglu was on his way to the rescue!

"Master!" the voice had projected itself into his mind. "I am at the far edge of the city."

Pratt started to give him an order, then remembered what had happened to the animal and its rider.

"Moglu! Listen carefully! Do not enter that way! Drive around to the hills behind the city." He looked

above him to see if he could find some sort of landmark to which he could direct Moglu. The cliffs seemed denuded to vegetation. Then he espied it. The cliff just to their right had a peculiarly shaped boulder at its top. "We are at the bottom of the cliff to the left of the one with the strange-shaped boulder at its top."

"I hear you, Master," came Moglu's acknowledgement.

The time passed in interminable measure. They watched Pratt pace about in curious wonder. To the rest, it was only a matter of time until they either starved to death or chose to commit suicide. They couldn't understand the tenseness Pratt was showing. They knew their case was hopeless. Suddenly Pratt lifted his head in an attitude of intent watchfulness.

Cocking his head to one side, he listened again for that sound which had dimly come to his ears. Then his eyes crinkled at the corners. Moglu had come through! There had been the unmistakable sound of the truck motor from somewhere above. Then Moglu's voice came to them:

"Master. I am here."

Their joy was short-lived at his appearance, however. For they weren't the only ones who were conscious of the strange vehicle and its driver. At-tu and his minions had also seen him. Simultaneously with his voice, a shower of spears fell among them. At-tu was not going to let them escape that way.

Quickly, Pratt gave directions:

"The hose alongside the truck body! Attach it to the winch."

Moglu's voice was a plaintive sound:

"What do you mean?"

There was no time for detailed explanations. Already the spears were falling too close for comfort. They were kept busy hopping about in their

desperate efforts to escape the long metal-tipped shafts.

"Never mind," Pratt shouted. "Just drop the hose over the cliff and hold on to the other end."

The four inch wide hose snaked down the side of the cliff—just fifteen feet short of their reach.

Pratt came to an instant decision. Standing directly below the hose, he said:

"Laeri. You first."

Maeri's brother looked at him in wonder. What did he mean. 'you first?'

Pratt didn't wait for Laeri to figure out his meaning. Reaching forward, he jerked Laeri to him and bending, placed his hands together to form a sort of stirrup. Laeri caught his intention instantly. Lifting his leg, he put his foot onto the waiting palms. With a single, tremendous heave, Pratt threw Laeri upward. Jama-at gasped at the display of strength. For Laeri's body had gone even higher than the hose' end.

LAERI grasped the thick rubber hose and began the ascent to the cliff top where Moglu strained against the weight of the climbing man.

Jama-at was next. He too found sanctuary on the cliff top. But Pratt was faced with a problem in Moglu. When he tried to heave the immense body of the giant, it proved to be an impossibility. And to make matters worse, the aim of At-tu's men was improving. Twice, spears had fallen too close for comfort.

Once again, Pratt was faced with a hard decision. And this time the odds were altogether against him. Throwing a, "wait here," to Moglu, Pratt leaped for the hose and scrambled up its length. Arriving on top, he turned to the giant holding the hose and said:

"Lower yourself over the side. I'll hold onto your legs. That way he'll be able to reach the hose."

Bracing himself against a rock outcropping, Pratt held tight to the oak like legs of Moglu. In a few seconds he felt an immense weight take hold of the hose. Slowly, exercising all the care and strength at his command, Pratt drew back. His arms felt as though they were being pulled from their sockets at the tremendous load they had to bear. Once, his right leg slipped in a smooth spot in the soil. Throwing himself on one knee, he recovered his balance. Then, with a patience he never knew he possessed, Pratt came erect once more and continued the hazardous task he had undertaken.

Back, inch by inch he went, until the first of the giants appeared on the cliff top. Then it was easier. For then there were two men pulling at the hose.

Pratt breathed in long, gasping breaths. They gathered around him and gave voice to their admiration. He made light of his feat. Already his mind had a new problem. One they'd completely forgotten in the excitement of the escape. Maeri! She was still prisoner.

At-tu still held the trump card.

"I would put the whole city to the sword and flame," Jama-at savagely snarled.

Laeri was silent but his glowering features spoke louder than words of how he felt. Pratt could only feel the bitterness of their position. The cigarette which had remained between his lips through all that had taken place, had gone out. He removed it and started to throw it from him—and stopped as abruptly as if he had been struck by lightning. Almost immediately, however, he rejected what had come into his mind.

Jama-at, shrewdly guessing that

whatever had made Pratt pause as he did, must have been of unusual importance, asked:

"What were you thinking of, my friend?"

"I thought I had a way of freeing her," Pratt said.

"Go on," Laeri broke in.

"It's no use. We can't take the chance."

"Why?" they both asked.

"Well, I thought, when Jama-at mentioned flame, that I could provide that. But it might only result in her death."

"Just what had you planned on doing?" Jama-at asked.

"In that truck," Pratt explained, "is enough inflammable material to set the whole village ablaze."

"I see," Jama-at said. "And you thought that in the resultant confusion we would engineer her escape. But there is nothing wrong with that."

"Oh yes there is. Two very important things. Why did you think I told Moglu to drive up to the cliffs when the obvious route would have been the way we were brought in? It struck me as queer, then, that At-tu's men gave their animals a free rein. There is only one explanation. That there is no known path to the village. Only those two-legged beasts know the way. And that by instinct only. It would have been suicide for Moglu to have attempted to drive down that path. Reason number two, the truck holds a liquid, which will spread unchecked when ignited. The second reason can be discounted if we could devise some means of getting around the first."

"I think I have the answer to that," said the Moglu who had been driving the truck.

HHE HAD extricated himself from the depths of the cab and had

joined them, on the lip of the cliff.

They looked up at him expectantly.

"It is obvious, at least to me, that At-tu built his city where he did because it can easily be defended. With only a single means of ingress the attackers would naturally use the obvious road. And knowing the habits of those two-legged beasts, the emri, I know that they travel in single file when arriving at a water hole or when they have reached their corral."

"Therefore the attackers would be engulfed in the quagmire. Let us carry it one step farther. Let us assume that what has attacked the city is a natural enemy. It knows no barrier. For example, a flood. The city lying in a hollow, would be inundated. At-tu is not stupid. He must have devised some means of escape, other than that single path. That means will be shown to us when they are faced with calamity."

Pratt looked at the giant in sheer amazement. The answer he had given to their problem was so simple, yet so brilliant that an immense respect filled Pratt's soul at the giant's reasoning capacity. There was still the chance...but Pratt dismissed it. Maeri was a prize which At-tu would not easily give up.

As one, they ran for the truck. Pratt started to get into the driver's seat but Moglu shoved him gently aside. The 'hole' the giant had made in the cab top, gave Pratt a start. The windshield hung precariously by a couple of brackets. Only a small section of the top remained. There was a sort of lopsided grin on the ape-like face of Moglu as he got in through the top, grunting and groaning with the effort.

Laeri, Jama-at and the other giant scrambled onto the trailer and waited with unabashed curiosity for the thing to start. Pratt sat beside the huge figure in the driver's seat. Mog-

lu set the truck into gear and Pratt felt his chin drop. His respect for the giant deepened with every passing moment. He had told Moglu everything about the truck, except the most important thing, the gear shift. Yet the giant had correctly reasoned out the proper procedure of shifting. The truck moved surely and swiftly across the open plain.

The wheel was pressed close against Moglu's belly. But he handled the wheel with a sureness that was astounding. His bare, immense foot pressed the accelerator clear to the floor board. The truck roared out into the night at terrific speed. Moglu drove with an ease that held Pratt spellbound. In less time than he thought it possible, they arrived at the top of the gentle slope leading to the village of tents.

The Earth was setting. They saw by the departing light that there was an unwanted activity in the city. It was apparent that their escape was not to go unpunished. At-tu was preparing to send a party after them.

It took only a few seconds for Pratt to give the necessary instructions. Then while Moglu drove the truck slowly along the slope, the rest ran alongside with the hose playing out as they ran. Pratt sat astride the trailer watching the flow of gas. The sharp, acrid odor of gasoline filled their nostrils. The highly inflammable stuff was slowly filling the long depression.

The guage showed that a thousand gallons had been let loose. Then Pratt shut off the flow.

MOGLU stopped the truck and they gathered around the cab waiting for the next move. Pratt lit a cigarette amid exclamations of wonder. And flipped it far toward the center of the gasoline filled slope. Even before it struck, there was a

burst of flame, which rose high above and illuminated the entire vicinity with a scarlet glow.

"Back on the truck," Pratt commanded tersely.

They watched with tensed nerves to see the reaction of At-tu to this danger. Had Moglu reasoned right? Was there an escape outlet?

The moonmen had done their work well. They had spread the gasoline evenly across the depression. A solid sheet of flame stood between them and those below. Pratt felt a quiver of fear when he saw how well they had done. He could not see how anyone could get past it. Already the flame was attacking the first row of tents. They burst into instant flame. And the fire spread with amazing celerity through the village as the liquid sought its own level.

Then, through the smoke, there rode a dozen men. At their head, holding the body of Maeri, was At-tu. A second after their appearance, another body of mounted men came into view. These also rode pell-mell after their leader. The five above were quick to note that they had started from a point just beyond the flame stricken area.

Even as he gave directions to follow, Pratt's keen eyes saw that some of those who had followed At-tu were carrying something behind them.

The truck sped in pursuit. The emri's speed was almost unbelievable. The flaming slope was left far behind and they were almost to where the cliff-like hills began their abrupt ascent when At-tu and his men pulled up. Then it was that those above saw what the last of the mounted men had dragged behind them. It was a sort of carpet.

Two of them, at a distance of perhaps twenty feet apart rode up the slope, dragging the rush-like carpet

behind them. When they arrived at the top, they took stakes from their robes and made the carpet fast to the ground. Then at a signal from one of them, the rest rode up on protecting material.

Moglu had parked the truck at a distance from At-tu and his men. For the first time that night, luck favored them. Great clouds obscured the Earth, making it difficult for those below to see Pratt and his friends. The truck had made little noise as it had sped in pursuit. Moglu idled the motor, waiting for further instructions from Pratt.

He was just waiting to see who would be the first to ride up. His eyes lit up when he saw it was to be At-tu and the girl.

"Let's go!" he shouted, slipping out onto the running board.

Moglu divined Pratt's intention. Straight for At-tu the truck roared, throttle wide open this time, the motor roaring in full throated challenge. Just as they arrived, the clouds parted. At-tu's face showed amazement but no fear. His reaction was instantaneous. His arm fell across the emri's back in a vicious swipe and the startled animal leaped ahead in a single immense bound that put them in advance of the truck.

But their advantage was only momentary. The truck was far faster than the two-legged beast. In a few seconds they were racing alongside. Pratt's lips were parted in a wide grin. He could see the girl, her eyes wide in fear, was held tightly in the crook of At-tu's arm.

Then they were racing even.

PRAATT crouched on the running board trying to gauge the exact time when to make his leap. Gently, Moglu maneuvered the truck alongside. And Pratt left his feet in a

diving leap. Just as At-tu drew his sword and swept it over his head and down in a huge swipe. It was too late for Pratt to do anything about it. But just as the arm came down, Maeri struck the descending arm with a quick blow. The sword passed harmlessly over Pratt's head.

The force of Pratt landing against At-tu knocked all three to the ground. The sword knocked from At-tu's hand. When they arose, it was an even match, insofar as weapons were concerned. But only for a minute. Pratt's first savage lunge brought him face to face with At-tu. The Ekfoo chieftan was taller than the Earthman. But there his advantage ended.

Pratt fainted with his left and as At-tu followed the misleading blow and stepped away, Pratt stepped in and to the right. The right cross Pratt drove to At-tu's jaw sent the taller man spinning to the ground. Pratt started toward him once more but stopped at the sound of approaching hoofbeats. Simultaneously, there came the warning from one of the men on the truck:

"Quick! The Ekfoos!"

Pratt took hold of the girl's arm and started at a trot for the truck, which had moved off several yards. At-tu lay athwart their path. Pratt was intent on getting the girl on board and was not paying any attention to the inert figure of the Ekfoo chieftan. The first he knew that At-tu was neither unconscious nor dead was when a strong hand grasped his ankle and rolling on it threw him to the ground.

"The truck!" Pratt grunted as he renewed his struggle.

At-tu's fingers wrapped about Pratt's throat. Slowly Pratt's opponent arose still holding Pratt helpless in his grip. Above the strangled beat of his heart and the gasping, tortured

sound of At-tu's breathing, Pratt heard the pounding of the emri's hoofs. Held high in the air, his feet dangling above ground, almost powerless to move and knowing that if he did not release the terrible pressure about his throat, he would be dead in short order, Pratt raised both hands high above his head. And brought them down on the skull of At-tu.

At-tu let out a strangled gasp. Then as Pratt struck once more, the Ekfoo's fingers released their death grip for the barest instant. In that second, Pratt drew back his fist and lashed At-tu across the bridge of the nose. At-tu let out an anguished groan and let Pratt fall to the ground. Pratt struck with lightning like suddenness. Two blows, deep into the man's middle sent him staggering. Before he could recover, Pratt hit him again, this time with all the terrific force at his command. The blow took At-tu on the point of the chin. And broke his neck!

Pratt turned then, to find that he had delayed too long. Three of the mounted Ekfoos, swords gleaming, eyes and hearts thirsting for his blood, were on him. Even his speed, blinding though it was could not save him.

THE THREE men rode abreast. They were only a yard from him when, as if it had come from the sky, the gas truck struck into the center of the three. There was the squealing of brakes and Moglu put the truck into reverse, leaving behind the shattered bodies of men and beasts.

Pratt breathed long and slow, savoring each breath as though it were his last. To their left, the sun's huge disk was coming up over the horizon. And behind them was the dim glow of the burning village of the Ekfoos. Maeri snuggled against Pratt, her head on his shoulder. She seemed

content there.

For the first time since his arrival on the moon, Pratt felt at peace. It was a strange sort of feeling. He didn't try to rationalize it. He knew only that he was content. Mainly because of the girl whose head was resting against his shoulder.

The others were holding a low voiced conversation. For a while their voices were something foreign which kept intruding into the mood he was in. Then he became aware of what was being said.

"There is only one thing to do now," Jama-at was saying. "We must get back to Stamat."

"Why?" asked the Moglu driving the truck.

"Because we must let Komu know what we learned."

"About what?"

"The Hammars! They are plotting to conquer Luona. At-tu was the first ruler they approached in their scheme."

Jama-at's words broke the spell Pratt was in. He heaved a sigh so deep it awoke Maeri from the sleep she had fallen into. Pratt's voice held an edge of bitterness as he asked:

"Listen! Don't any of you people here eat? Or is that a lost art on Luona?"

"You are hungry?" Jama-at queried, surprise in his voice.

"Well—I have been hungrier. But if it's a rule that a person has to let three days go by before eating, I guess I'll have to abide by majority."

"It won't be long," Laeri broke in. "We have only thirty mons to traverse before we reach Stamat. There, you will find food in abundance."

Pratt sighed again, this time in contemplative pleasure in the thought of the steak he was going to order.

"Forgive me my question, but where are you from?" Laeri asked, after a few moments.

Pratt grinned humorlessly at the query. It was going to be a job explaining where he was from, how he got to the moon and what he intended doing now that he was here. Laeri's question brought back thoughts of the planet he had left, the people, places and events which he had been part of, while he lived there.

"Me?" Pratt laughed softly. "Guess I might as well tell all. If for no other reason than to get back to the proper perspective. And keep things in balance.

"That body of earth and water which has just set, is my home. Pardon me, was my home. Sometime, when the atmosphere is right and we are in the proper conjunction, I will point out the specific point from where I came.

"How or what it was that contributed to my being here, is a mystery. One moment, I was driving a gas truck from Pheonix to Roswell, the next I was here." Pratt shook his head in vexation. It came to him that he had also told Moglu approximately the same story. Was he going to have to repeat it to everyone on the moon?

"So," Laeri said speculation in his voice. "Parta is inhabited. I had always wondered about that." His voice was suddenly eager, boyishly thrilled. "Tell us a little of your life there."

"Yes," said a soft voice from beside his shoulder. "Tell us about yourself."

UNDER THEIR urging Pratt gave them a pocket version of his life's history.

"There isn't a grcst deal to tell," he began. "Born in the city of Chicago, twenty eight years ago, I lived most of my life there. Went through the University, played football: it's a sport: and won a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford. Did a paper on the 'Pat-

tern Thinking Processes Of The Ubangi's' and got a Ph. D. for it.

"Went out into the world, a full-blown intellectual. And discovered that a Ph. D. didn't pay the grocer's bill. Knocked around for a spell, trying to give my life a more constructive appearance. Discovered that living entailed more than having a knowledge of the literate things. Then I got the job of driving the gas wagon for Mutual Gas. And that, my friends, is all there is to my life, past tense.

"Now," Pratt continued. "We come to my life, present tense. I find myself on, as you call it, Luona, but which we term, the moon. Contrary to popular belief, it is inhabited. Further, the physical features of Luona are not as I had been led to believe. And that is a fact to which I can not reconcile myself. For I have seen, through a telescope so powerful it was able to show great mountains on the moon's surface, that the greater part of the moon's area was mountainous. Yet all the evidence before my eyes is to the contrary."

"The most logical explanation of that," said the Moglu seated on the trailer, "is that not only were the factors of space involved in your adventure but also of time. Hazarding a guess, I would say that you arrived on Luona several million years in the future. That is in relation to time as it was on Parta."

Pratt thought it over. Moglu had the proper evaluation, he was sure. And was amazed again, that least human looking of all he had come in contact with on Luona, had the most reasoning of minds. He thought also, of the first men he had met, those queer creatures whose means of locomotion was to curl up into a ball and roll along the ground. He wondered who they were and what was their status on Luona?

The thin, ape-like lips of the Moglu driving parted in a grin. He had read Pratt's mind.

"They are the outcasts of this world," he said. "Cannibals by nature, they are a pariah race. Luckily, they are too few to do any harm. No. But we have a people here who are a menace. The Hammars!"

Again the 'Hammars.' Pratt was intrigued. Who were these Hammars that they inspired such fear?

"The Master Race of Luona, they call themselves. Jama-at thinks they came to At-tu with the purpose of involving him in their scheme. But we know differently."

"Huh?"

Moglu was patient.

"Don't you remember? At-tu accused you of being their emissary!"

IT CAME back to Pratt, then. Moglu was right. Then what did Jama-at mean. As if in answer, Jama-at said:

"It was Toat, that spittle-licking, scum, who told us of the Hammars. I thought that At-tu was party to their scheme. It was only natural."

"No one is accusing you of anything," Laeri said gently. "Your loyalty to my father is too well known for anyone to cast doubts on it."

"Let's get back to the Hammars!" Pratt said impatiently. "Why, or rather, how are they a menace?"

"They are the only people on Luona who have some scientific pretensions. I say pretensions because after seeing how matter of fact you have been about this vehicle, which to us is a wonderful thing, I have no doubts but that there are far more amazing things to be found on your planet. There has not been a war on Luona, within the memory of man. We have, however, numbers of war-like people. The Ekfoos, for example. But the reason for war, material gain,

is lacking. For the most part, people here lead a simple, unpretentious life. Our cities are not complex things, depending on commerce for their existence. But the Hammars live on the dark side of our planet. Few of us have ever made the journey to their distant land. I have heard however, that there are many marvelous..."

"Hold it, Moglu!" Pratt broke in. The giant's habit of digressing at great length on unimportant things made it an interminable tale. "Just tell me why these Hammars want to conquer Luona?"

"Why? Because they are philosophers, that's why."

The answer stunned Pratt. Certainly, it wasn't the answer he had expected. Now that he had been told, it only made the issue more cloudy. Patiently, Pratt continued his interrogation:

"I don't get the connection. What has their philosophy to do with their making war?"

"Their's is a philosophy of force. Peace is static condition. War, on the other hand, involves movement, releases minds from the torpor of safe, easy living. Peoples involved in the strain of conflict, are more healthy because the conditions of war enforce the necessity for thought. All this is quotation, by the way."

Pratt whistled soundlessly. The Lunatic fringe also existed on the moon. And was as capable of as many mad actions as those who had existed on the Earth. Well, it was their show. He didn't want any part of it.

"I'm afraid that isn't possible," Moglu said.

Pratt groaned. The giant had read his mind once more.

"What isn't possible?" Pratt asked.

"Your washing your hands of the whole matter and saying it's none of your affair. Had you been able to sit

in this vehicle for the rest of your life on Luona, then it could be. But since you have participated in events you must continue to do so. Whether or not you want to participate has no bearing on matters."

"Okay," Pratt grunted sourly. "All I've got to say is, that it's a hell of a state of affairs when the slave tells his master what to do." It had come to him that Moglu and Maeri were his slaves, by their own admission.

"It is an old custom but one which no longer has any validity," Moglu gently explained.

SOMEHOW, Pratt felt better at the words. The thought of Maeri as anyone's slave was abhorrent to him. As for Moglu, Pratt felt the greatest respect for his intelligence. One thing however, which was proving irksome. Moglu's ability to read his mind. Thinking was no longer a private concern. And there were times when a man wanted to be alone with his thoughts.

"Very well, then. I shall stop being a minority of one," Pratt fell in with Moglu's reasonable demand. "Lead on Mac Duff. My steed and I will follow, wherever you lead." He patted the dashboard as though it was the flank of a horse.

The sun was now well above the horizon. Pratt looked curiously about him. The flatness had given way to rolling, hilly country, much like that of southern Illinois. Once he saw a group of strange animals at the edge of the forestland. As the strange vehicle approached, they made off with queer piercing shrieks. Then they came to a wide river. Bluffs lined the opposite end as far as the eye could see. Pratt could see no bridge or other sign of a way of crossing the river. Moglu continued

driving so Pratt gathered that there was a way across.

The road, if the belt of sand they were on could be called that, led upward. Pratt, looking ahead, saw only the flat side of one bank and the top of the bluffs bisecting the horizon. Then they were over the rise and rolling down hill. And Pratt saw the bridge.

It was just a plain affair, wooden and rising in a slow arch across the river at a narrow part. Moglu made the turn and they drove across and in between the narrow defile of the bluffs at that point. The hills rose sheer to either side of them for as far as Pratt could see.

"It is not far now," Maeri said. She had been watching Pratt and had surmised that he had been thinking of how long the journey would last.

He turned and grinned at her. She was a funny sort of girl. Quiet, she rarely intruded in his thoughts. It was a nice trait, that. Nicer than most of the other girls he had known. He closed his mind quickly at the thought. He remembered what had happened when he thought of the comparison between her kiss and the others.

He thought it odd they could not always read his mind. Still, they were able to get through frequently enough to make it embarrassing. And something else. How was it they knew English? Or he knew their language? He was sure that Moglu would have the answer.

"Ah!" Maeri exclaimed suddenly.

He returned to the present and saw her eyes were affixed on something close by.

It was a sign, fixed to a post. The sign read:

Stamat: Ten mons.

IT GAVE him a start. A signpost! But why? It was obvious that

there were no motor vehicles in the land or Moglu would not have been so amazed at the truck. More, Laeri and Jama-at had also shown the same feelings on seeing it for the first time. Suddenly he burst into uproarious laughter. Moglu looked down at him in surprise. But his curiosity had to wait for an explanation. The bond between them which made for telepathic communication was shut off for the moment. Otherwise the giant would have known that Pratt laughed because he thought it funny that such a simple thing as a signpost should have made him imagine devious reasons for it.

The hills spread, as though a giant hand had pushed them apart. The road also widened until it was a broad, smooth thoroughfare. Pratt's eyes went wide as he saw what lay in the near distance, Camelot! If not the abode of the knights of the Round Table, then certainly an excellent imitation.

A large city lay revealed to their eyes. Turreted towers, stone houses, reminding Pratt of an English scene, the whole perched in a valley. Pastoral Beauty, the like of which he did not associate with what he had seen of the rest of Luona. Suddenly Moglu applied the brakes. The giant's eyes were narrowed in speculation.

Pratt followed his gaze and saw approaching, a group of men whose strange attire made him blink. The illusion of Camelot was complete. For clattering toward them were hundreds of mounted knights, complete in armor.

Maeri turned and shouted to her brother:

"Father! Look, Laeri."

"I see," said her brother. Pratt could see the broad grin on his face.

The horsemen came to a clattering stop several yards before they reached the truck. It was evident they

were wary of this strange thing. Then the leading horseman saw Laeri, perched on the trailer. Setting spurs to his horse, he came up at a gallop, to come to a sliding, dust-enclouded halt.

The man in armor raised the visor of his helmet and revealed a bearded face, whose stern visage was made redeemable by a pair of gentle gray eyes.

Maeri leaped from the cab and ran toward him. In a second the man was off the six-legged steed and had thrown his arms about the girl. Laeri, Jama-at, and Pratt joined them. Holding the girl at arm's length, her father asked:

"Where did you find her? And what happened to you two? Your armor, where is it?"

"One question at a time, father. But first, let me introduce. What is your name? He turned to Pratt in bewilderment.

"Theodore Pratt Marsh. I imagine we were a little too busy to bother with the formalities of introductions."

Laeri grinned crookedly.

"Yes, I guess we were. Father, this is the man who saved not only the life of your daughter but ours as well."

Laeri's father thrust out a gauntleted hand. Pratt, who had watched the powerful embrace with which Komu had greeted his children had felt misgivings for their safety. Hesitantly, he put his hand forward and was surprised to find it clasped in a strong yet *fleshy* grip. He gave the gauntlet a look of suspicion. It had the appearance of metal. And all around him, he could hear the sounds of clanking armor. Another mystery which would have to wait for a solution.

SEVERAL of the men had gathered about the truck and were making either complimentary or mystified remarks about it. Komu, his arms

around Laeri and Maeri, his arms forward for a closer examination.

"He comes from another world," Laeri said blandly.

"Yes. Isn't it wonderful, father?"

Maeri chimed in.

"So? Another world, eh? Hmm.

Well, Theodore Pratt Marsh, I can only say that you have my heart-felt gratitude for your great deed and that whatever your wish shall be my command."

There was no sense in trying to pass off what he had done as being of no consequence. These two, Laeri and the girl were the children of a reigning chief. Pratt murmured something something about them being 'too kind,' then lapsed into silence.

"But tell us, mighty Komu," Jama-at asked curiously, "have you brought out the entire army to seek us? Or is there another reason for their being with you."

A stern look came into the kindly eyes of the man in armor. His lips sheared a straight line across the lower part of his face.

"Aye," he said. "There was another reason. Shortly after Laeri and you left to seek Maeri, an emissary of my friend, Horta came to me with dire tidings. The Hammars were putting into reality the threats they had been making through the years. A vast horde of them have debauched from the dark side of their lands and are marching on the rest of our world. As time went by, I became fearful that they had taken Maeri hostage. And so you found me on the road to meet them and take vengeance."

"Alone?" Laeri asked incredulously.

"How do you mean? I have my entire army with me."

"Surely we need more than that," Jama-at said softly.

"So Horta said," Komu replied.

"But he wanted time to gather allies.

I told the emissary that I would seek the Hammars out and give them battle, thus delaying them until we could muster enough to face them."

"It is good strategy. But will it serve the purpose for which it was intended? Have you received reports on how large an army they have? Did the emissary tell how Horta came by his information? Did he..."

"Enough! Do you take me for an idiot? Yet—you are right. Perhaps I was too hasty. Coming as it did, on the heels of Maeri's strange disappearance, I surmised—well, it's no matter now. You are all safe."

"For the moment," Jama-at said in reminder. "May I suggest that the army return to Stamat? If the Hammars are on the march, we will do better than go to meet them in this manner."

Pratt waited, one foot on the running board, for them to make their minds up. He stepped within the cab when he saw Komu nod in agreement to Jama-at's suggestion. Maeri, her brother and Jama-at took their places once again and the cavalcade turned back to Stamat.

PRATT waited until the sub-chiefs had said their say. He looked about the huge round table, around which were gathered all the important people of Stamat. At the head sat, Komu. Pratt had listened with mixed feelings to the talk which had gone the round of the table. A great deal of it had been childish. Of them all, only Komu and Jama-at had any idea of a plan to put into use against the invaders.

"May I say something?" he asked, not being able to hold his feelings in abeyance longer.

Komu nodded gravely for him to have his way.

"It is evident that war is something about which you people know noth-

ing."

Some of the men gathered there made as if to stop Pratt.

"Let him have his say!" Komu thundered.

Silence fell.

"It is true," Pratt went on, unperturbed at the interruption, "that I know very little of these Hammars. But, from what I have gathered listening to you here, I know enough. That they come from the dark side of Luona: that they have the reputation of being wizards: that they are not many in numbers: and that the rest of the peoples of Luona are afraid of them. Hell! I'd say they had you buffaloe!"

Expressions of wonder showed on many faces at Pratt's incomprehensible phrase. He went on without pause:

"Since, by your own evidence, they come from a long way off, I gather that it will take them a long time to reach their nearest goal. Their only means of transportation are these six-legged animals you call, *minas*. As for their weapons, the sword and bow is as far advanced as you people have gone in the art of war. So that in the final showdown, it will be a matter of man against man. Therefore, I have a suggestion to make.

"While you plan and gather a sufficiency of allies, I will go out to meet them, see how large a force they have, reconnoiter the ground, get the lay of the land, as it were."

Silence greeted his words. But in the faces of Komu, Jama-at and several others was to be seen that which told Pratt that his plan *had* found favor.

"Do you plan on going alone?" Komu asked, musingly.

"No. I thought of taking the Moglu. They know the land and one of them can spell me in driving."

"Father!" Laeri said unexpectedly.

"I would also go."

His father nodded.

"Very well. You will be properly outfitted with all the gear that you may need. When do you plan on leaving?"

"As soon as I can."

"Very well. Laeri! See to it that all is taken care that you may leave tonight."

Laeri leaped from his seat, a broad grin on his face. Running around the table until he reached Pratt, he took hold of his arm saying joyously:

"Wonderful! Follow me, my friend."

Pratt shook Komu's hand in farewell. As he passed Jama-at the warrior stopped him and said:

"Careful! They are treacherous, the Hammars. And before you reach them, you will have to traverse a dangerous land."

Pratt's eyebrows reached skyward at Jama-at's words. Laeri, dragging at his arm, prevented him from asking what the other meant. He filed the words for future reference, however. The Moglu, who seemed to know everything would have the answer to that.

"Wait!" Pratt commanded as Laeri started in the direction of the armory. "I—I want to say good-bye to Maeri."

Laeri patted his shoulder and said: "I'll wait here for your return."

SHE WAS seated by the window, when he entered her room. A serving maid was brushing the long blond locks of her hair. In the strong sunlight, her hair had a golden tinge. The sound of the door opening made them turn. Maeri smiled gently on seeing him. The maid, seeing the smile, murmured something and slipped shyly from the room.

"Look!" she said, pointing to something which was taking her attention beyond the window.

He stepped to her side and followed her gaze.

Below, in the immense yard of the palace, were gathered a great throng of warriors. Some were mounted on the six-legged minas, others were afoot and still others were on animals, the like of which Pratt had never seen. There was a constant eddying movement, a display of colors of every hue of the rainbow. It was the second day since Pratt had first set foot in Stamat. And all that morning and the day before men had been arriving in a steady stream, summoned by Komu and his friend. Many of these people carried pennants, flags and insignia of their cities.

He turned his glance from the outside and centered it on the entranced girl.

"Maeri," he said softly.

She turned swiftly to him.

"Yes?"

"I am going away."

Her eyes went wide.

"What do you mean?"

He bit his lips. It was going to be difficult to tell her, he realized. If for no other reason than this was the first that she was going to hear of his feelings.

"It was decided that I and the Moglu were to go out and..."

The color fled from her cheeks, leaving them more pale than the rose and twice as lovely. There was no need for him to go on. She knew what he had to say. Silently, she arose and walked straight into his arms. He held her away from him and said:

"Don't worry! Now that I've found you, there isn't anything in this world that'll keep me from coming back."

She wasn't an Earth woman, weak, neurotic. She was of Luona where life was hard and decisions had to be made whose consequences could be—death! Gently, she kissed him once again and whispered:

"I will be here...whenever you return."

Turning, he walked from the room. Nor did he turn for a last look.

The smile Laeri greeted him with was wiped from the boy's lips when he saw the stern look on Pratt's face.

"This way," he said in a low voice, leading him toward the armory.

IT WAS an immense room, high vaulted, stone-walled. Great racks held spears in orderly rows. Other racks held an assortment of swords. The warrior in charge sized Pratt up and in a trice had him fitted up in a suit of the strangely light armor. It was as smooth and light as the finest silk.

"How effective is this stuff?" Pratt asked.

"It will turn the sharpest sword point," Laeri answered.

Pratt's lips pursed.

"I suppose you know what you're saying," he said grudgingly. "Still..."

Laeri smiled knowingly.

"Have no fear," the other answered. "It will serve the purpose for which it is intended."

"What of the Moglu?" Pratt asked, thinking of their large bulk.

Laeri shook his head. "We have nothing that will fit them," he said. "I suppose, because the thought that they would never be our allies, never occurred to us."

The armorer, who had gone off in search of a sword for Pratt, returned just then, bearing a large, two-edged blade.

"Heft it," he commanded.

Pratt took hold of the hilt which was large enough to accommodate both hands, and swung it around his head in a clumsy gesture. But clumsy as it was, the blade hummed in the air. The armorer's eyes went wide on hearing the sound.

"By my father's loins," he whispered in an awe-struck voice. "It will go ill with any man who falls in that blade's path."

Laeri shook his head in amazement.

Pratt was embarrassed by their display of wonder. He attempted to pass it off as nothing. "Look" he said, "after all, you have to take into account the fact that things here don't have the weight for me which they have for you."

But they continued to shake their heads in wonder at his feat. The armorer patted his shoulder, surreptitiously feeling of a bicep as he did so.

Pratt's embarrassment was dispated by the entrance of the Moglu. The two giants stood silent in respectful attitudes, waiting for their leader's command.

"Well," Pratt said hastily. "Might as well be off, eh Laeri?"

Laeri nodded and made for the exit.

Pratt's heart gave a lift at sight of the gas truck. It was his only link with a past which was forever gone. Now that he knew that matters between him and Maeri were as they were, he no longer cared ever to leave Luona. There were no ties to return to on the Earth.

H smiled at sight of the cab. The Moglu had been busy. Only the windshield remained. And he saw too, that the entire truck had been covered with the silk-like material which passed for armor. It was a clever move, designed to protect the truck from being pierced by an arrow or spear.

The truck had been brought into the enclosure by one of the giants. Pratt seated himself in the cab with one of the giants beside him. Laeri and the other sat on an improvised seat just behind the cab. Slowly, Pratt maneuvered the truck around until it was facing the opening in the enclosure. Then he looked up

toward the window of Maeri's apartment. Nor was he disappointed. She was leaning from the window and at sight of him she waved her hand. He answered the gesture and gave the truck a burst of gas. It sped from the courtyard to the accompaniment of the cheers of the assembled warriors. Pratt had an idea that it would be some time before he saw them again.

THE NOW familiar countryside sped by in its rather monotonous sameness. Moglu was driving. Pratt had given the wheel over to the giant right after they had left Stamati.

"Any idea how long it will take?" Pratt asked after they had spanned the bridge leading to Stamati.

"It depends on how swiftly the Hammars have moved," the giant answered.

They rode in silence for a while. Then Pratt decided it was as good a time as any to have the questions which were bothering him answered.

"You speak an excellent English. Where did you learn it?"

The prognathous jaw of the giant spread wide in a grin.

"You speak an excellent Luonian," he answered. "I might ask you the same question." He laughed softly, then went on: "As a matter of fact, neither of us speak what we think of as language. It's a thought process too quick for human perception. Our thoughts are instantly translated into sound. What you hear are those sounds. To you they are as you call them, English. To us they are Luonian. But here, they are universally understood."

Insofar as Moglu was concerned, it was a simple explanation of a simple fact but to the Earthman's more than ordinary grasp of things it was far more complex than Moglu made it out to be. Jama-at's warning came to mind, then.

"What sort of country do we go through?" he asked.

"How do you mean?"

"Jama-at mentioned something of the danger we would encounter," Pratt said. "I wondered what he meant by that."

Moglu's face sobered. He remained silent for several moments collecting his thoughts and putting them in order. He knew it was going to be difficult to explain what Jama-at meant. The sign which fell from his lips held an odd note. An exasperated note.

"To begin," Moglu offered in explanation, "I must clear up one or two things for you. For one thing, there has never been any close contact between nations. Each has been self sufficient. To such a degree, indeed, that any intrusion, even of accident, has been regarded with suspicion. In the end, it has led to a sort of aggregation of nations and peoples. Some of the nations on Luona have never permitted their peoples to go beyond the borders of their own lands. So that a great deal of this planet's surface is a mystery to them."

"Now that a war has been declared, all of that is going to prove of detriment to us. For we are moving into regions of hearsay. From now on I can only say that it has been told that so and so is the case. Or that it has been said, these people are like this."

"Well," Pratt interrupted. "What about those, 'rollers' I met? And the Ekfoos? You seemed to know a great deal about them."

"We do," Moglu said, "But that is because they are on the light side of Luona. Very soon we will enter the dark portion. That is the side which is a mystery to us."

A PHENOMENA of nature took place then, which took Pratt's

attention from Moglu. The sun had sank beneath the horizon. But the now familiar Earth glow was missing. It was a region of gloom. Shadows blended in such a way that it was difficult to tell the real from the imaginary. Pratt flicked the headlights on.

Deeper and deeper into the land of gloom sped the truck. Here and there, trees raised their ghostly shapes across the headlight's beam. Moglu drove as casually as if it was broad daylight. Pratt realized after a few moments that the gloom was not as intense as he had imagined it to be on first glance. As a matter of fact it proved to be a sort of twilight land. Trees, rocks, and physical things were slightly distorted. But after he had accustomed himself to it, the land proved far less fearsome than it had been at first.

"It was from this part of the world that tidings came of the invasion," Laeri said.

Pratt looked up and asked:

"Oh yes, Laeri. I meant to ask. How did this Horta hear of it?"

"Seems that these border folks are the link between the rest of Luona and us. They heard it from some who live deeper in the land of darkness."

Pratt had not noticed that they were on rising ground. The labored sound of the motor made him turn his attention to Moglu. The giant's face reflected a concentration that was compelling. Suddenly, Moglu slammed on the brakes and shut the motor simultaneously. The twin beams of lights flickered off.

"Listen!" Moglu whispered.

Pratt strained his attention to the task. The air was warm, quite fragrant with the smell of flowers. It was still. The peep of birds could be heard. He could hear nothing else. Then he heard it! Or rather *felt* it. Sound that was as palpable as the

wind which brushed his suddenly wet cheek. He realized the wetness was of sweat.

The strange sound was all about them. It was to be heard from beyond the snub nose of the radiator: from behind the sloping back of the trailer. On their left and to their right. It enveloped them like an evil blanket. Pratt felt the hackle rise on his nape.

"What is it?" he whispered hoarsely.

"I don't know," came the equally hoarse response.

The strange sound came closer. Now they could characterize it. It was the sound of wind! But of wind they had never believed possible. Pratt looked up and saw that the sky was obscured by clouds. The darkness complete, intense with blackness that was impenetrable.

Then the wind struck them.

So terrific was the blast that the truck swayed drunkenly in its grip.

"Start the motor!" Pratt screamed.

But his words were torn from his lips and never reached the giant. Pratt reached down and turned the key. Moglu understood the gesture and pushed at the starter button. The motor caught with a roar. Moglu put it into gear and they were off.

He had stalled the truck on the top of a small hill where the wind was able to lash them without mercy, and did. Dust, pebbles, earth struck them with the force of hailstones. They could only cower as low as possible against the wind.

PRAATT and Laeri had the protection of their armor. The visors of their helmets gave them protection. But the Moglu had nothing. Further, their added height made it impossible for them to escape the hurricane blasts. Already the giant was finding it impossible to drive any

farther. Pratt knew that the truck had to keep moving. Yet if he attempted to leave the wind would carry him away as if he were no more than a leaf torn from a branch. Instead, he lifted with a display of strength that amazed even him, who had become somewhat accustomed to it, Moglu from his seat and holding the giant body aloft, slid into the seat occupied by the other. Moglu fell with a crash into the vacated seat.

No sooner did Pratt solve that difficulty than another presented itself. The wind was becoming stronger with the passing minutes. The truck labored against the almost supernatural strength of the blasts, making so little progress that it was difficult to tell whether they were moving or not. More, at times the wind was so strong that it tipped the truck.

Pratt knew that because of the gas it would not require much to tip it over. Yet no matter what direction they faced the wind met them head on. Once more the truck tipped. Frantically, Pratt twisted the wheel in the direction in which the wind had swung the body. An interminable age went by before he felt the truck right itself. He turned in the interval between that blast and the next, to find that the giant was no longer beside him. He felt, rather than saw another come into the vacated seat. It was Laeri!

"Stop it!" Laeri shouted.

"What?" Pratt screamed in answer.

"This—this vehicle! The Moglu has seen something ahead. He and the other have gone to investigate."

Pratt took it out of gear but left the motor on. The two peered beneath the visor of their helmets, trying to see where the giants had gone. It was almost impossible, what with the dust and dirt flying about. Then Pratt saw a shape at his side of the

cab.

"Move over!" A voice said.

It was one of the Moglu.

Pratt did as he was ordered. The giant took command. He steered the truck to the right. Where he was going was mystery to the other two. But it was evident that he knew. For in a few moments they reached an area of calm.

Pratt and Laeri got out of the truck, slowly, laboriously. They moved stiff-legged as if their strength had been expended in some physical struggle. Pratt threw his visor up with a tired gesture. Looking about he discovered that the explanation of the calm was quite simple. The Moglu had spotted the outlines of a hill and had driven the truck into its lea. And although the wind could still get at them, it had lost most of its effect.

The two giants were seated on the ground. Pratt saw that they were exhausted by their battle against the wind. The two in armor joined them. They sat there for a long time, waiting and wondering when the hurricane would abate.

"Look!" Laeri exclaimed, after a while.

Pratt followed his gaze. Their outstretched legs were being covered with dirt. It had been so gradual a process that none had noticed it. They all recognized the danger, however. There was no way of measuring how fast the dirt was piling up. But in the short while their fascinated glances watched, they saw that the tops of their legs were already covered.

They scrambled erect and looked wonderingly at each other. In each glance was the same question, how long could they remain in safety? Desperately, Pratt regarded the hillside. Perhaps there was safety in it somewhere? He lifted his hand in a

gesture of command and they followed as he set out to investigate the possibilities of this thought.

Once again it was one of the giants who found what they hoped to. Because of the armor Pratt and Laeri wore, it was impossible for them to have felt the air escaping from the fissure in the hillside.

ONE BY ONE they entered the narrow gap into the Stygian darkness of they knew not what. Pratt berated himself for not bringing his flashlight. It was too late to go back, however. The silence was almost frightening after the maelstrom of sound from beyond. Gradually they became used to it. And to the gloom of the cavern. They had been gathered in a group, as if in the proximity of their numbers, there was safety and sanity. For somehow, the cave had a frightening effect on them.

It was the Earthman who first recovered his courage.

"We act like a gang of frightened schoolkids," he remarked caustically. "It's only a cave."

Laeri's voice when he answered trembled slightly, but his words were brave enough.

"Yes. I always wondered why just being in the dark was frightening. Perhaps it's because our mothers used to scare us in our childhood with tales of what hideous things were to be found?"

"H'm. Maybe," Pratt answered absent-mindedly. He was staring toward an odd phenomena. Light, pale and phosphorescent, was streaming from the darkness in the cave's depths. "Wonder what that is?" he asked speculatively.

No one seemed to have a reasonable answer.

"Might as well see," he offered in suggestion.

He took the lead when they fell in with his suggestion. The source of the strange luminescence proved to be further afield than they thought. And the cave proved to be deeper than they had imagined on first entering it. At first they walked in single file, close on each other's heels. Then, as the cave widened and the light grew somewhat stronger, they separated into two ranks. The giants exclaimed in wonder as their startled eyes beheld the wonders of the strange cave unfold before them.

"Look!" one of them exclaimed.

"Why—it's a statue!" said Laeri, peering closely at what Moglu had pointed out.

They gathered around the odd figure. As tall as a man, it was a perfectly simulated figure, complete even to garments. But the most astonishing thing about the statue was its eyes. They seemed alive! On closer examination, they proved to be some sort of glass which, reflecting the light, made them look alive. They continued in their search and in a few minutes came upon another of the figures. Then, at regular intervals, they met more of them until, with a suddenness which was startling, they ceased.

"Do you know how many of them there were?" one of the giants asked.

None besides himself had bothered to count.

"Two hundred," he said.

They continued with their investigation, talking over in whispers the mystery of the statues. Soon they fell silent. The weird luminescence increased. It festooned the ceiling, dripped from the walls, left glowing footprints behind them. It increased, yet, somehow never grew brighter.

On and on they went, nor could any of them say how long they had walked. It must have been for a long time because Pratt began to feel the

gnawing pain of hunger. Yet he would not turn back.

AS abruptly as they had entered the region of the strange light, they left it. The cleavage was complete! Behind them was the glow, in front was a half-gloom, in which could be seen, but faintly, the contours of the cave.

They stopped, as one, at the boundary. Four heads turned simultaneously to the rear. It was as if they possessed a common consciousness which had told them that ahead lay danger. And once again, Pratt took the lead. Straight into the murky gloom. Fearfully, the rest followed.

The gloom lightened, became gray, then almost as light as day without sunlight. They perceived in the new light that the cave was narrowing. They saw at a distance, that they were coming to a bend in the cave. Pratt began to wonder, belatedly, when their journey would end. He hoped that it lay beyond the turning. Then they were faced with the bend. It was abrupt: right-angled.

They pressed close to each other, regarding the turn with looks bordering on suspicion. For it was evident that it was a man-made turn. The sheer sides of the wall ahead were of concrete or some similar stone. Taking a deep breath, Pratt moved into the bend.

It proved to be a tunnel a few yards long. At its end was a flight of stone stairs. They led upward. The four gathered at the bottom of the flight and looked questioningly at each other for the space of several seconds. Laeri grinned and shrugging his shoulders said in an amused tone:

"What have we to lose? We've come so far without mishap. No reason to stop, now."

Pratt answered the boyish grin. The Moglu remained silent. But their

features were tight in strain. It was obvious that they were suspicious of all the mystery.

Pratt continued to grin as he started up the stairs, but Laeri noticed that he had drawn his sword. He followed suit, as he trod hard on the Earthman's heels. The stairs spiralled upward and they followed its circular bent. They ended on a wide platform—was another series of stone stairs! They regarded the stairs with bewildered looks.

"This is silly!" Pratt said agrievedly. "We go up. Then we've got to go down. For what reason?"

Laeri shrugged his shoulders. He echoed Pratt's sentiments. But the Moglu found an intent behind the bewildering paradox of the stairs, that was not of innocence.

"Wait!" one of them said, as Pratt started down.

He paused, waiting to hear what the giant wanted.

"It isn't silly," Moglu said gently. The other giant nodded in agreement. "On the contrary, I am beginning to see a purpose behind all this. What that is, I don't know. Perhaps it's instinct. At any rate, let me suggest that instead of all of us going down, let me be the one. And if it's safe, I'll return. If not, you will know by my absence, that something is wrong. Remember, we have a mission. My loss will be a small thing."

Pratt bit his lip. Moglu's action was heroism of an extreme sort. He saw then, for the first time, that although he and Laeri were armed, the giants had no weapons whatever. Pulling his sword free of the scabbard, he handed it to the giant. Silently, Moglu accepted the weapon—and started the descent.

sort of something to pass the time until the wind storm passed. Now, there swept over him the certainty that something deeper than chance was at work. The stairs and the statues were evidence that human hands had been at work. It was natural that the questions of why and who should be asked.

A feeling of the deepest revulsion and fear suddenly swept over him. It was as if he had been brushed with something unclean. He found that his jaw was tightly locked as if he was expecting contact with a force which he feared yet had to fight.

The stairs made a turn shortly after the top. Darkness masked the mystery of what lay below, hid Moglu completely. They waited above, tense, expectant, not knowing for what but hoping for the best. His fist clenched and unclenched convulsively. The wait became intolerable. And only silence answered the question in his mind.

A voice, magnified ten-fold by the sound chamber of the stair shaft, came booming upward:

"Master! Come below!"

The sudden, booming sound gave them a start. But from the excited quality of it they gathered that all was well below, insofar as danger was concerned. They trotted down the stairs hard on each others' heels. And when they reached the level where the giant was, they stopped stock still and looked open-mouthed at the scene before them.

Pratt was reminded of a theater stage. They were in one wing and stretching before them was the width of the stage. But a stage barren of people. Only the props were there. And what props! Moglu more excited than at any time since Pratt remembered, was motioning them forward. He was standing before a number of the same stone figures they

PRATT had accepted the cave and what they had seen there, as a

had seen earlier.

It was vast cavern, man made, hollowed out at what vast effort and to what advantage, Pratt could not guess. And the entire cavern was filled with row on orderly row of the stone figures, all male, At a rough guess, he judged there were a thousand of them.

All alike, they looked as if they had been manufactured by some machine. The figures showed a remarkably life-like human delineation. Even the folds of the robes they wore seemed real in the drape of the stone cloth.

Laeri who had interested himself in something else, called excitedly from a far wall:

"Pratt, look!"

They gathered around the excited Laeri. He was pointing to a fixture on the wall. Pratt now saw that there many of the same fixtures fixed throughout the cavern.

"Lumino lights," Laeri said.

"So?"

"This place is inhabited."

"Was," Pratt amended. He pointed to the footprints they had made in the dust. "It's been a long time since any one was here. The dust in those prints are at least six inches deep. And that makes me wonder. Notice that the walls are of concrete: roof also. So how did dust get into here? There must be an exit."

AS though the words were an order, they set about looking for it. But if there was one it was well concealed. Pratt, tired from the strain, leaned against a section of the wall. It pivoted outward with his weight. He stumbled and slipped to his knees, on the outside. Scrambling erect, he looked dazedly at the blank face of the wall. Then he put his hands against it and pushed. The wall swung on its pivot, revealing the startled faces of his friends.

They came out slowly, looking all the time at the great stone gate. Curiously, they examined it. A foot thick, it had been constructed so cleverly that when it was closed there wasn't a hair-breadth's space between the fittings.

"Now why," asked one of the Moglu, "do I think there is a connection between the wall and the stone figures within?"

Laeri shrugged his shoulders and said:

"Must there be?"

Pratt held his silence but he too thought as the giant did. He realized that a discussion would be speculative and idle. Further, the storm or whatever it was, had passed. The hunger he had begun to know returned. Darkness still covered the land. From what they said, the darkness was eternal. But he saw that it was tempered by a light grayness which passed for the daylight of this world.

His hunger was the only gauge by which time could be told, as far as he was concerned. Some time during the previous day he had eaten. But since the moon revolved so much slower, more than twenty four hours had passed.

"My Master hungers," one of the giants said. It was a simple stating of a fact. "Rest here," he went on. "My brother and I will seek food."

They were a pair of grotesque, ape-like shapes, moving out into and becoming part of the gray scheme.

The two who remained found a flat boulder on which they seated themselves to await the return of the Moglu.

"Those statues puzzle me," Pratt said, returning to the thought uppermost in his mind.

"There are many strange things in this dark world," Laeri observed. "No doubt there is an explanation. Why worry about them? They can do us

no harm."

"About these *strange* things, you speak of. How come they are strange? Certainly we haven't gone so far that the nearest people to the dividing line can't have a knowledge of what goes on."

"Perhaps they aren't as curious as you."

"Granted! Yet they have contacts with the Hammars. For it was they who gave warning. Therefore—wait a minute." His brows knit in concentration. Then he slapped his thighs with a gauntleted hand. They rustled with the sound of silk. "Laeri! Who are these people?"

"What people?"

"The ones who have told you of the Hammars."

"They are called, Jannsi."

"And they are the only ones who have seen the Hammars?"

LAERI turned a puzzled glance in Pratt's direction. He couldn't understand what he was driving at.

"So I've been told," he said.

"And I'll wager that whoever else heard of the Hammars, heard of them through the Jannsi. Laeri, the plot is beginning to unfold—but I can't as yet see what's behind it."

"Just what are you driving at? Why it's almost universal knowledge that the—I see," Laeri had suddenly stopped in his reply. Slowly, he went on, "Assuming that. . . I . . . hang it, Pratt what could be their reason then, for declaring war? Why there aren't more than a few thousand of them altogether."

"I'm beginning to understand, a little," Pratt said. "Look. They spread a rumor of an invasion. As I remember, your father said the invasion was coming from this direction. Therefore they gave him this direction in which to look and move to meet the mythical Hammars. And I'm willing to bet

that it was they who originally suggested that he gather all the allies together and move from Stamat."

"Go on," said Laeri.

"Then," Pratt continued, "they would move in. Of course I have no idea why."

"Nor I," Laeri confessed. "But I think the Moglu might have."

"The Moglu? What makes you say that?"

"Their lands adjoin the Jannsi's."

Pratt sighed in exasperation. He felt as if he were one of the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. And whoever was fitting the pieces together was deliberately putting him first in one position, then another only to confuse him.

There was a crackling sound in the underbrush beyond the boulder on which they were sitting. The giants appeared, carrying the carcass of a small animal between them. They threw the carcass at the feet of the two on the boulder, and kneeling at its side began to dismember and skin the animal. Pratt saw that it resembled an Earth deer.

"How did they do it?" he asked. "Whistle to it?"

"The Akra is one of our most tame animals," Laeri explained. "It will feed from your hand."

"Yes," one of the giants said, grinning. "We fed him—and now it will feed us."

It tasted like venison. The warmth of the small fire the giants had built was welcome against the chill of the bleak wind. Their hunger satisfied, the four relaxed in the warmth.

Once again Pratt brought up the subject of the Hammars:

"Laeri tells me you people have had dealings with the Jannsi," he said.

The ridged and muscled facial flesh wrinkled into new lines as the giant to whom Pratt addressed the

remark, turned in his direction.

"It is common knowledge. What makes you ask?"

Pratt then gave him a resume of the conversation he had with Laeri. The two giants nodded somberly at the conclusion.

"Now that you put it in that light," one of them said, "We can see that there has always been something strange in that they seem to be the only ones to have been able to communicate with the Hammars."

"But they seem to be such harmless people," the other giant said. "Why," he broke into hoarse laughter. "Why," he continued "they are as little children. Not alone in body but in mind as well."

"How's that?"

"It would be rather difficult to explain. You'd have to see them to get an idea of what I mean."

"And a good idea it is," said Pratt. "Suppose we do just that."

"But what about the Hammars?" Laeri asked.

"That is one of the questions our *childish* friends are going to have to answer," Pratt replied.

PRATT turned and walked past them and through the half-open wall. Laeri sighed resignedly, but followed the Earthman's lead. The Moglu brought up the rear.

Pratt turned and looked back at the narrow fissure in the rock through which the four had just come. Even at the few yards which separated them from it, it was almost invisible. Further, there was a slight overlapping of the surface at that point, making it even more difficult to recognize the fissure for what it was. And with the fact of the constant semi-darkness, it was just sheer chance which had led the Moglu to stumble on it.

The truck was mired almost to the

hubs in dust. The Moglu instantly set out to scooping handfuls of it and tossing them aside. Pratt and Laeri used the flat sides of their swords as shovels. It was a labor of necessity. They were a weary four, when the last handful and makeshift swordful had been tossed to the side. Pratt realized he could use a bit of shut eye, then. The giant beside him forestalled any possibility of that by saying:

"Continue in that direction." He pointed ahead. "It will not be long before you will have reached the Jannsi's land—what there is of it."

"Yeah?" Pratt said shortly. Tiredness crept over him with the slow, smoothness of water. Almost, he was indifferent to everything. It all seemed so unimportant beside the greater desire to get some sleep. He wondered when the inhabitants of Luona slept. In the short, or rather long few days of his enforced residence, he had known them to have only a few—hours? sleep.

The giant was in one of his chatty moods.

"Eat and sleep. That is the best description of the Jannsi. And think. They sit for hours, and do nothing but contemplate the wonders of creation."

Pratt envied them their ability and time. . . to find sleep.

The truck rolled on over the smooth sand of the road. Relentlessly, his eyelids closed. The voice of the giant became a lullaby to which Pratt found himself nodding. Once and again his eyes opened wearily. Then they closed in sleep.

He did not know how long he slept. He only knew that he was awake and that the truck had stopped. He surveyed the scene before him through bloodshot eyes. Laeri and the other giant were standing beside the truck.

He joined them. Above them and beyond the shallow bed of what had

once been a stream, was a low mesa. They paused above the shallow bank and as they stood there, one of the giants said, casually:

"Best let us make our presence known."

THE two started down. Pratt watched them for the barest instant. He smiled shallowly. Those two! They had proved their worth in more ways than one. Even in the small detail of acting as ambassadors...and before Laeri's dumbfounded gaze, Pratt had suddenly and inexplicably leaped after them.

They had gone perhaps twenty feet while the two above had watched. But it wasn't too great a distance for Pratt to jump. In fact, he leaped clear over their heads. Laeri watched them stop short as Pratt's body arched over them and came lightly to rest just past them. He saw the Earthman say something and saw the two shake their heads vigorously. Once again spoke, this time with a vehement shake of his head. He had evidently given an order for the two giants made an about face and the three started back to Laeri.

Perplexed, the son of Komu watched them approach. Why had Pratt made that sudden leap? What had been in his mind? He could tell nothing from their expressions. It was as if they had all assumed the same mask, blank and stolid.

The Moglu stood to one side. Pratt was in profile to Laeri, one side of his mouth down-drawn in half a snarl.

"What's wrong?" Laeri asked.

"We are either fools—or simpletons," Pratt said softly. "That thought came to me as I watched them walk away from us. That thought...and another."

His manner was mystifying in the extreme. And Laeri was the sort of

person to whom everything had to be explained.

"Didn't it occur to you," Pratt asked, "that either the Moglu know what they are talking about or they don't? There is no middle way."

Laeri waited for Pratt to continue.

"Don't you see," Pratt said sharply, on seeing the blank look on Laeri's face, "it doesn't add up? They say they are the only ones who can communicate with these Jannsi. Then how did your father's friend hear of the Hammar invasion? How did At-tu? Or Jama-at? None of them mentioned the Moglu. Who volunteered to lead us? The Moglu," he answered his own question. "And now they want to take us to the Jannsi—but *first they must go alone!*"

"You mean they are traitors?" Laeri asked incredulously.

"Worse, maybe."

"What are your intentions?"

Pratt bit his lower lip in vexation. Truth to tell, he didn't know. If he only knew what was behind the Moglu's minds. Perhaps he was wrong about them. But on the other hand, if the circumstances proved them to be traitors...so what? He and Laeri were on the spot anyway. He made up his mind then. Let the giants lead them where they will.

He called them over. They stood silent, glowering, waiting for his decision.

"You have said that you were our friends," he said.

"Yes!" they answered emphatically.

"Very well. Prove it."

They understood his meaning. Turning, they started once again for the Jannsi domain. Pratt and Laeri followed at distance. They had not far to go. Beyond the river bed lay a broad path, evidence that many people had used it for it was well worn and rutted from the countless

steps which had trod it. The path led upward, up the face of the steep but short plateau. The Moglu waited for the other two, when they reached the top.

"We will go together," one of them said.

Pratt nodded in acquiescence.

"It isn't far," said the other giant. "See! There in the center."

IT WAS JUST another shadow to Pratt. Then he saw the outlines more distinctly. The structure he saw puzzled him. Then he knew what it reminded him of. The pueblos of some of the Arizona tribes. Only in miniature.

He thought it was a matter of perspective. The low-walled series of stone houses were at a distance of about a half mile. And beyond them he saw the far rim of the mesa, a vague blot on the horizon.

They made for it in single file.

"Ho strangers!" a voice shouted.

And was echoed and re-echoed a thousand times, "Ho strangers!"

The four stopped short at the sudden sound. The Moglu had led them to the lip of a dip in the plateau. It extended downward thirty or forty feet. Below the dip was a cleared area, fully a hundred yards across. The first of the series of pueblos began at the far edge of the clearing. The strange voice had come to them from the bottom of the dip.

"It is the Moglu," one of the giants shouted in reply.

"Who comes with you?" came the query.

"Friends."

"Enter then," came the command.

Pratt kept looking to right and left, as they made their way down the slope. Emptiness met his gaze. The giants continued toward the nearest dwelling, after they reached the bottom, seemingly undisturbed by the

voices.

And then with a suddenness that was unnerving, the voices sounded again. This time they came from every direction: from the right, left, above and below. Not only voices, but shouts screams, groans and queer distorted noises, not human in sound. Instinctively, Pratt's hand swept to his sword. But as the Moglu continued to advance, paying no attention to the voices and sounds, Pratt's hand fell away from the sword hilt.

The sounds died away. The voices fell silent. And that was worse than when there had been sound. For now there was only silence in answer to their footsteps. A silence which was more unnerving than all the sounds put together. It was like a mantle of evil which had fallen about them. Like the darkness, it held a strange power. The power of conveying a mood. And the mood was of compelling fear. Not fear of the known. But of the unknown. It was so palpable that Pratt found himself clenching his fists, gritting his teeth.

Then a single voice, Stentorian shouted:

"Hold!"

"Wait here," one of the giants said in a low voice.

They did as he bid.

Pratt's jaw went slack, when he saw what was approaching. He had expected any number of things. Remembering the four armed Rollers he had first encountered, he thought that the Janssi were some sort of strange beings, perhaps with more than one head, or possessing a plurality of noses. But what he saw coming toward them was—ridiculous!

The Janssi were midgets!

They came running from the hives of their pueblos, like ants on the quest for honey. In a moment Pratt and his friends were surrounded by

hundreds of them. One, who seemed to be the leader, took command of the situation.

"Enough!" he halted their jabbering. "Let us to council with these."

THE LITTLE men surrounded them and marched in a body to the largest of the low, stone dwellings.

Pratt found time to admire the architectural perfection of their homes. They showed evidence of a high cultural plane, far higher than any of the others he had seen hitherto. More, a closer view of the exteriors showed that they had been constructed cleverly, proving an engineering skill beyond any of the other tribes on Luona.

Although the Jannsi were midgets their homes were almost full scale in their furnishings. Most of the Jannsi stayed outside. When Pratt counted noses he saw that only ten of the little men were on the council. And saw them clearly for the first time, in the lighted interior of the council chamber.

About four feet in height on an average, they had the most enormous heads Pratt had ever seen on a human. And the heads were completely bald. Other than their shortness of height and bareness of scalp, they showed no other variations from the usual human form.

"Moglu!" began the leader of the Jannsi in a stern voice. "Give us the reason for this trespass!"

The giants looked at each other for a second. One of them gulped audibly and began:

"It was not of our doing, highness. This man, my master..."

"Your—what!" the midget fairly screamed.

Pratt watched in astonishment as the giant fairly groveled at the Jannsi's exclamation.

"The law...the law, highness. He won me in combat."

"Go on," said the other as the giant hesitated in an apparent waiting for the Jannsi's approval.

"Just a moment!" Pratt decided it was high time he took over. "What is this all about? Who are you? What the hell are you yelling for?"

The bald head, immense as a huge cantaloupe and of about the same color, turned a bright pink. Oddly enough, the midget's face did not change color. It was this which made Pratt burst into uproarious laughter. Midgets and giants, mental telepathy and stupidity, crudity and culture, all together as on the Earth. Only on the moon, there was more of the side-show atmosphere, what with four-armed men, and armored knights vying with advanced philosophy. It was to laugh, that these huge carcasses of flesh should be afraid of these little men. Why, with a sweep of the hand they could make mince meat of the Jannsi. *Then, why, Pratt suddenly wanted to know, did he feel this fear which had so compellingly swept over his senses?*

Suddenly the little men no longer looked like comic valentines. Instead they had become enveloped in an aura of incarnate evil. He noticed their eyes, hidden under flesh, hairless lids, were unblinking in their intense surveyal of him. The leader in particular kept his eyes glued to his face with a stare almost hypnotic. Then, like a flash from the blue, strange words impinged on his mind. They were strange only in that they were so unexpected:

"Watch! Be careful! They are experts in hypnotism!"

He had no need of searching for the one who sent the message. Only the Moglu had the means of sending it. Automatically, he re-acted as the giant wanted him to. And not a mo-

ment too soon.

Thought waves winged their way to him. They came from all sides.

"Look at us!"

"DO NOT BE AFRAID!"

"WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS!"

He thought it funny that these commands should be capitalized, as if they had come to him on a tape.

SUMMONING all his will power, he closed his mind to everything he heard with it. "*Only the extraneous matters,*" he willed fiercely.

Suddenly there was a void in the air, which in the moment before had been filled with the clash of dynamic personalities. A voice, low, mute with power, intruded into the silence:

"What do you want here?"

It was the leader of these strange little beings.

Pratt could not take the chance of thinking. He acted with instinct. Shrugging his shoulders, he said:

"I don't know. We were brought here by the Moglu."

The huge-headed little man turned his gaze to the giants.

"Why did you bring them here?"

"The short one—his father is Komu of the Stammats—they heard of the Hammar invasion," one of the giants stuttered.

"They compelled us to accompany them," bleated the other.

"Why did you bring them here, fools?" asked the inexorable voice.

"We thought that you could deal more properly with them," came the answer.

The leader of the Jannsi was silent for a moment in introspection. The same blank look was on his face when he said, at last:

"Good! You were wise in bringing them here."

"Yeah. Why?" Pratt wanted to know.

"Because," the little man with the

big head said in reply, "there are certain things which are not to be divulged—until we want them to be."

"And suppose we don't feel like staying?"

"That too has been taken into account."

Pratt smiled shallowly. There were a lot of them, it was true. But he had an idea that they were too smart to fight. There must be another reason for their seeming indifference. Still, he had to know. Drawing his sword, Pratt began a slow retreat, drawing Laeri with him, with his free arm.

"Behind you," came a sudden warning to his brain.

He whirled with the speed of light. Just in time to leap from the path of a sword blade's slicing sweep. His leap carried him half way across the room, backward, over the table in the center. His feet had barely touched the ground then he had jumped once more, back into the fray. Too late to save Laeri, but not too late to avenge him.

The room had suddenly filled with armed men. Strangers. Normal sized men. He had seen one of them strike Laeri and saw Maeri's brother go down. Blind, all-consuming rage swept over him at the sight. He landed among them, his sword lashing at them in powerful blows. *Chips fell from them as his sword struck.*

He had been more or less aware that they were dressed differently than the Jannsi. But it was a momentary glimpse. Now he saw them for what they were, the stone men of the cave. He went cold in a numb sort of horror at the realization. That such a thing could be. That they could move...and talk. For of a sudden he saw one open his mouth...and words came out: slow hesitant words, as though the act of talking was a task just learned:

"Kill! Kill! Must kill!"

IT WAS IN that numb second, when his faculties were in the grip of this new horror, that the Jannsi chief struck with the weapon of hypnotism. Pratt felt as if he had been struck an actual physical blow, it affected him so. Not alone was his mind petrified but so were all his physical properties. He had been in a crouch at the moment of recognition. When he tried to straighten, he couldn't.

He felt the message the Jannsi brain sent to one of the stone men: "Strike now!"

But there was nothing he could do about it. He saw the stone arm rise above the carved head, saw the sword it held descend in an incredibly slow movement, and felt it strike—and knew no more.

IF THE Master will permit..." Pratt heard the words as from a vast distance. And heard someone answer:

"Aye."

"It is only too apparent that our plans for the conquest of Luona have been circulated over the planet. We have looked into the mind of the Earthman and found in the memory lobe of his brain the impressions of past conversations with Komu and his Haifa. Further, we have found..."

"Spare us, Lister. We all know the results."

"...Well then. I think that the time to strike is now! If they should discover the Cavern of the Stone Men—and guess correctly the reason for them, it would be a simple matter to seal it."

The second voice answered in a bored tone:

"All that has been provided for, Lister. As for our plan, it will be put into execution soon. The Moglu will return to Komu, bearing news of

his son's capture. They will volunteer or rather leap at the chance to come to his rescue. For there will be an added incentive: the Moglu will tell them that they escaped and can lead them to us. Therefore they will bring their entire army or armies to the field."

"They?" the second voice interrupted.

The first voice held a hint of sarcasm when it replied to the question:

"Have you forgotten that one of the principal points in our plan was to bring all enemies of our people together in one place so that it will be the easier to execute them? And what better place than the field of battle? Especially when it be of our choosing!"

There was an interval of silence. An interval in which Pratt was in turn tortured by what he heard and by the visions brought to his mind of the consequences. Maeril! The thought of her and her gentle loveliness at the mercy of the Jannsi made him see red. He had not the slightest doubt that what they meant by the taking of the women would lead to some form of artificial insemination. He strained his will power to the utmost. But it was of no use. They had placed him under bonds beyond breaking.

"Moglu!" the first voice called a command. "You will carry these two to the cavern where lie the rest of the stone men. Deposit them among the rest. Then do as we have instructed you."

The hairy, ape-like face of one of the giant's swam into the ken of Pratt's vision. There was nothing in the giant's face which could be read one way or another. It was blank. Suddenly he was erect. He had a full view of what was in front of him. But beyond that he could see noth-

ing. He could not so much as blink his eyelids. As though it was a magic lantern slide, the body of the other giant appeared carrying a stiffened figure. Pratt recognized the figure immediately. It was Laeri.

Then Pratt knew what they had done to him and Maeri's brother. Somehow or other they had transformed them into *stone men*. There was no difference in Laeri and all the rest they had seen in the cavern. But if that was so how was it that he was able to see and hear? It was all too apparent that Laeri's eyes were stone sightless orbs. Then it was obvious that so were his.

THE GIANT placed the stone figure on the floor. Pratt needed no more proof than the solid thump of it hitting against the floor.

He felt himself lifted; felt himself being carried; but when he was placed beside Laeri he had no feeling of the floor. Evidently only some of senses had an awareness of things.

Then the Jannsi gave the two giants their last order:

"Be off, then, and do not delay more than necessary."

They were escorted by the midgets until they reached the limits of the shallow circular valley in which was located the village. But it wasn't until the giants had placed them in the narrow gutter which ran the length of the truck.

The darkness had given way to a grayness even more depressing than the somnolent gloom usual in the land of the Jannsi. Pratt was, for the first time assailed by the deepest feeling of frustration. It all seemed so useless to him, if there was a purpose in his being transposed to the moon. The adventures leading up to his being taken prisoner by the little men had a comic opera air about them. The di-

rect simplicity of the people he had met were now submerged in the more abstract but more real villainy of the Jannsi. And he realized, too, that his friends, for so he thought of them, were in a position of danger beyond anything in their comprehension. What made it the more horrible, was their and his inability to cope with the situation.

The giant who had laid him in the gutter had placed him on his side. He saw in a dim sort of fashion, that they were moving. He heard grating sound of meshing gears and rubber tires soughing on the silicate of the road. He was thankful that his condition was such that he could not feel the bumps. It was small consolation.

The Moglu lifted the two who had a short time before been flesh and blood, and carried them into the cavern. When they arrived in the hall in which the rest of the petrified men stood in their orderly rows of mute waiting, they stood Pratt and Laeri among them. They stepped back and looked at them. Pratt wondered at their looks of worried introspection. They had done their traitorous work well. He was dumbfounded, when he heard one of them say:

"And now that we have found the reason for these, what can we do about it?"

"Yes," said the other, "what? The Earthman is now as the rest. We were fools! What avail were their armor and weapons against the insidious minds of the Little Men?"

"But what else were we to do, brother?" the other wailed. "The Earthman has the strength of ten. He would have killed us had we not led him to the Jannsi."

"Why," burst out the first, "why must the giant and the midget have the greatest intelligence on this plan-

et? The rest, like children, have the capacity only for games. Would it have availed us anything to have warned them that we knew the Jannsi were plotting the slavery of a whole planet? They would only have—bah!

And when we did find someone who might have the drive and courage to circumvent these evil things, he had to carry with him a well-developed sense of suspicion. Now he is as the rest! And we are the worst off for it."

"Exactly! For now, after centuries of planning they are ready to strike, we who were the only ones to know of their desires, can do nothing. Always, we thought it was through hypnotism that they enslaved. Now we know that they have a machine which does it. And when the moment comes, these beings in here will march forth in their invulnerable, stone cloaks. And who will stand against them?"

They sighed in unison. Then the first said:

"What I don't understand, is why they have to march at all? Why, with this machine they could enslave all of us."

"I thought of that," said the other. "And I can only assume that it has a limited range. Remember, brother, that they placed our friends under its influence, one at a time."

"I think you are right. And each had to be given his instruction at the time he was under the machine."

"And what a simple yet effective instruction it was. 'Strike the enemy when we order you to.'"

Once more they heaved simultaneous sighs.

"Well," said one after a moment, "we might as well leave. As little good as our warning will do, we must warn them nevertheless."

The other nodded in agreement. They took a last hopeless look at Pratt and Laeri and left.

PRATT'S darkest suspicions were confirmed. Still he felt a glow of satisfaction in the thought that he had been wrong about the Moglu. They were his and the rest of the planet's friends. Not that it was going to do anyone good. He was almost thankful that the Jannsi had only bound his body. Although his thoughts were on the dark side, he at least was free to think. And not being pessimistic by nature, he felt that there had to be some way out of their dilemma. He thought again of what the two giants had said. Nothing there. The Jannsi controlled their bodily movements. What were the words the Moglu had said they used? 'Strike the enemy when we order you to.' And of course the enemy was to be whoever confronted them. Whoever—confronted—them! If Pratt had the power to smile just then, it would have reached from ear to ear.

He became aware of a tingling sensation. It started down low, somewhere in the region of his feet and spread upward, until his whole body was an itching, tingling mass. It felt very much like when a member of his body had fallen asleep and the blood had started to circulate once again. The tingling became almost unbearable and he sub-consciously started to lift his hand to scratch. To his complete surprise he was able to complete the gesture. It wasn't, however, a natural gesture. Rather it was something like an automaton would move his arm. There was that same stiffness of movement.

Then he became aware of movement other than his. He turned his head, and in the act was once more surprised that he was able to do so, and saw that Laeri was also lifting his arm to scratch. More, every figure in the hall was doing the same thing. It was the silliest thing he ever saw.

He noticed then, that the tingling

sensation had stopped and another desire had taken place. Almost as soon as he was aware of the new desire his mind had translated it into action. His hand had fallen down to where his sword lay sheathed. And had pulled it from its stone receptacle. He realized what was taking place when he saw that the rest were doing the same thing. A train of action had been put into being by a previously given command. Post hypnotism in fact.

The first file of men nearest the cave entrance turned in that direction as one man and marched forward, the rest wheeling in order to follow. As much as Pratt willed for his body to disobey the mental order, he found it of no avail. Like the rest he wheeled when his row's turn came and marched with them to the cave's entrance.

There were several hundred men lined up before the hill when he got there. Automatically, he walked forward to his place in the line. In a matter of minutes the whole of the army which had been within were lined up outside. Once again he felt the tingling sensation. It always seemed to presage any physical movement. For immediately afterward the first rank moved forward.

An army of stone men on the march. An army invulnerable to any of the weapons which could be set against them. An army that had received its orders and was powerless to disobey them!

Pratt felt no discomfort. In fact, he felt nothing. The fine sand made a pleasant crunching sound beneath his stone feet. He turned his head and observed the long ranks of men behind him, the long rows of automatons, marching four abreast. It was an awe-inspiring sight. And fear compelling. For if his plan would not work? He put the thought from him.

It was too frightening.

The road took the last turn before they reached the plain leading into Stamat. Already the first few ranks had passed from view. Then his row had made the turn and they were on the level grassy plain. And Pratt saw that the Moglu had done a good job of convincing Laeri's father of the danger Luona faced. For drawn up in a huge semi-circle was the entire armies of all of Komu's allies.

It was an impressive sight!

THERE were several thousand men, some mounted but most on foot. It was broad daylight and the sun reflected from the shining swords and spears they carried. In the very front rank were the armored men of Jama-at's command. Pratt heard the vast roar of shouted defiance which came from the thousands of throats when they saw the petrified enemy. But there was no answering sound from those who were coming to oppose them. Only silence. But in that silence was a threat greater than any words could describe.

Pratt and the rest continued to march forward until they were in the very heart of the semi-circle. Until they were entirely surrounded by a gleaming steel horn. When the last of them had come into the encompassing prongs, the prongs drew close together until it became a circle. Then a mounted figure rose in his saddle and waving his sword in the direction of the enemy, shouted:

"Charge!"

Simultaneously, there was projected on Pratt's mind the word images that had been placed there by the Jannsi, 'strike the enemy!' And Pratt knelt and picked up a rock at his feet and hurled it into the face of the man directly behind him. He only waited until he saw the rock strike, then he stooped once more and picked up another. This one he

heaved deep into the ranks of stone men.

Indescribable confusion reigned in a matter of seconds. For the one who had been struck first had retaliated by heaving a rock at Pratt. But his aim was not as good as the Earthman's. For the rock struck someone beyond Pratt. That one in turn seeing the missile, also stooped and found a rock and also heaved it. Forgotten were the swords they carried on their shoulders. They had been commanded to strike the enemy. But they had not been told with what. Pratt had hurled a rock and in turn had one hurled at him. It was an imitation like an animal's the way the entire army stooped to find stone missiles.

And then the mounted men struck among them. For a moment, it almost proved to be the wrong move. For the stone men immediately turned against them. Pratt realized that something had to be done before it was too late. Lifting his sword, he brought it down with all his strength on the shoulder of the man nearest him. A large crack appeared in the stone of the man's body. Pratt did not wait to see the effect of the blow. Movement had been restored to him. Although he could not get around as quickly as when he was flesh and blood, he did have a certain amount of freedom of movement. Enough for what he wanted to do.

He leaped among the automatons, striking as he went. Nor did he try to kill. He was content just to strike a blow and leap away. It was enough. It appeared as though their minds were also petrified, for none seemed to know who did the striking. Nor did they care. A blow had been struck them and they knew only to retaliate. And whoever was nearest became the recipient.

Not all of them, however, fought against each other. There were some

who fought against the flesh and blood warriors attacking them. And against those the legions of Komu and his friends made no headway. For the spears broke against the impregnable stone and the swords were likewise shattered. Nor was the armor in which Komu's own men were clothed sufficient protection against the stone swords of the petrified men.

Pratt made his way to where the Stamat chieftan and Jama-at were unavailingly hacking at the animated statues.

"Komu!" he shouted.

His voice was heard above the sound of clashing arms.

"It is I, the Earthman. Order your forces to retreat!"

THE TWO stepped back in amazement at the sight of him. It was obvious to him that they did not recognize him. Instead of doing as he said, they stepped warily forward. In their careful advance, Pratt read their unwillingness to commit themselves to a course any more perilous than of their own choosing. To them, he was another of the monstrous figures who had to be destroyed. Worse, for since they did not recognize him, they could have but a single purpose in the way they approached. To kill him. He stood his ground, even though he knew it was hopeless to attempt another appeal. From the corner of his eye, he saw more of the Stamat tribesmen follow their chief in his advance. As for the stone men, it made no difference to them. Not having any adverseries of flesh, they fought among themselves. Pratt was in a dilemma from which there seemed no escape. Then a voice, hoarse, thundering in warning:

"Hold!"

It was one of the giants.

"Hold!" he shouted once again. "It is the Earthman! I recognize him."

They stopped dead in their tracks at the Moglu's warning. There was utter disbelief to be seen in the eyes of the two and those who were following. Then Jama-at took his courage in hand and stepped warily forward until he was face to face with Pratt.

"It is as the Moglu says," he shouted joyously.

Instantly, Pratt was surrounded by the Stamat men.

"My son? Where is he?" Komu asked. There was fear in his voice.

Quickly Pratt spoke his mind.

"Call off your men! Have them throw rocks and spears among the stone men. They have no minds and will seek the nearest one on which to avenge themselves. I will find Laeri."

He did not wait to see what the reception was to his words but turned and made his way as quickly as he could to where he had last seen Laeri.

It was a wild and confused melee into which he committed himself. The Jannsi had enslaved the minds of these men when they were alive. But now they were dead. As dead as if literally so. Somehow they had managed to retain the last command given them by the evil midgets. But their reasoning power was gone. They acted with a perverted sort of instinct. Pratt, on seeing the purely automatic reactions they had back in the cave, knew that his plan had a good chance of succeeding. And his plan was a simple one. He had remembered the story of Jason and the dragon's teeth. It had and was still working.

If he could only reach Laeri before they destroyed both him and Komu's son?

He knew his task was no easy one. They were almost all dressed alike. But he had not remembered seeing any others who wore armor. So Lae-

ri, then, should be the only one wearing stone armor. It was a tedious as well as dangerous job. For the armor he wore being as fine as silk in the way it clung to the body's contours, folded around the figure and made it necessary for Pratt to examine closely each one he approached.

Time after time he was attacked. Time after time he barely warded off the clumsy attempts on his life. Then he saw a knot of them locked in close embrace. Their swords had been thrown aside and they were striking each other with their fists. He started to pass them when his keen eyes saw the peculiarly shaped hood of Laeri's headpiece.

LIFTING HIS sword high above his head Pratt leaped into the fray. The stone weapon came down across the shoulders of the nearest man—and broke in two, so powerful was the blow. And Pratt saw the sun reflect from the steel core in the broken piece that lay on the ground. Some of the mystery was gone. He knew, at least that the Jannsi coated these people with a solution of something which gave them a petrified coating, but left them as they were on the inside. And realized too the horror of the situation. For if the steel still remained in the sword, then the flesh still remained in the body. So that when one of their members was whacked off, the living flesh went with it also. He saw the proof of that in the arm which had been hacked off by his sword. He could see the bones, tendons, fat in its neat layers where the arm had been joined to the shoulder. The moment of stunned surprise almost cost him his life. And taught him something else.

First that there was no physical sensation attached to the act. For the stone man didn't even turn to look

at the wound. And in that instant the stone man reached him. Pratt had time only to throw up a protecting arm against the blow which was dealt him. He heard a crack and felt his heart turn in sick protest in fear of what it might mean. But it wasn't his arm. It was the others.

Pratt leaped back and the other continued after him. Pratt didn't know what to do. Caution bade him retreat. If he did Laeri's chances for revival were practically nil. Somehow, whether it was because there was something different in the physical makeups of the peoples of the moon and earth, or whatever it was, but the effects of what the Jannsi had done acted differently on Pratt. Mentally he was as alert as ever. But in that he was alone. So Laeri's reactions were as the rest. And in that was his biggest danger. For even if Pratt did reach him in time, there was the chance that Laeri would turn on him.

Suddenly Pratt felt an overpowering sensation of anger against these dumb Frankenstein-like monsters. Lowering his head he charged, football-fashion, into the heap of stone bodies. Disregarding any risk that he might be taking, he bulled his way to the center of the pile by sheer strength. His fists flailed a path before him. It was a miracle that he was all in one piece by the time he reached Laeri. The same could not be said for most of those who were unfortunate enough to have got into the way of those hammering fists. Broken members of bodies strewed the path he hacked out.

Laeri, like the rest, was engaged in a senseless pounding at whatever was in front of him. Pratt whirled him around and threw him over his shoulder. There had been perhaps fifteen of the stone men in path when he started to Laeri. There were still

seven who were whole. Some latent sense of anger made them draw together in mutual bond to oppose him. A single glance told him that there was little chance of either surviving the gamut they were being forced to run.

ONCE AGAIN he closed his mind to the danger. They were drawn about him in a loose semi-circle. Pratt started toward the center of the group, then as those to the top of the center swung to meet him, he shifted to the other end, running at full speed as he did so. Encumbered as he was, his speed was still too great for them to intercept. He struck the only one left to oppose him a tremendous blow and caromed off. The one who was struck simply disintegrated. Stone pieces flew in every direction.

Regaining his balance, Pratt continued to run until he was beyond pursuit. Then he placed the squirming body of Laeri on the ground.

"Well," he said softly, "you're safe at last."

The sightless eyes of Maeri's brother regarded him dispassionately for a second. Then, before Pratt could prevent or escape, Laeri brought his arm down on Pratt's head. There was a rushing sound, as of waters breaking loose. Darkness, interspersed with pinpoints of light became for an instant all of Pratt's life. Then there was only darkness.

FIRST THERE was stillness. Not the stillness of unconsciousness, but the quiet of a room that has no occupant. Then there was the sound of a door opening. The rustle of sandaled feet. The warmth of a body bending over his bed. Then the press of soft lips on his in a gentle caress.

Pratt sighed and Maeri drew back. He opened his eyes and saw her regarding him with eyes that were wide

and filled to overflowing with love. Tears wormed their way to the corners when she saw that he was awake. He lifted his arms and she flew into them with a keening sound.

"Darling," she moaned, "My dear! You will be well."

He looked at his arms. They were still stone clad. The tiny hope he held that he was as he had been, died.

"How long...how long," he began again, "was I unconscious?"

"Since yesterday."

"And Laeri? Where is he?"

Her face clouded over at the words. She gulped and her words came hard:

"They...had to bind him tightly so that he could harm no one."

"Where is your father?" Pratt asked.

"In the great hall."

Pratt swung his legs over the side of the bed. She drew back in alarm. "You feel...well enough?" she asked breathlessly.

He nodded and stood erect. There were no ill effects attached to the blow he had received. He stretched his arms above his head and bent at the knees.

"Good as new," he said to the girl who was regarding him with puzzled glance. "Well, might as well complete my unfinished business."

"What do you mean?"

"Those little men," he answered and his voice was suddenly tight. "They need to be taught a lesson—in morals. On Earth we have certain moral precepts. Covet not thy neighbors goods is one of them. They broke that. And so..." he did not need to complete his sentence. She understood.

Once again she pressed her lips to his cold stone ones. He thought it odd that he could feel their warmth. He patted her shoulder gently and

left.

His footsteps made a thunderous sound as he came into the now familiar hall. It was as if he had just left. The same men were gathered about the huge table. Only Laeri was missing. Every face turned in his direction. And fifty voices roared a welcome. He nodded gravely to them. They waited, expectant and hushed for his words. And each felt that what he was going to say was going to effect each of them to the greatest degree.

He looked about him. Into every face. And was heartened by what he saw. For in each face was the same grim determination. They would follow wherever he led.

"The vehicle," he said to the two giants who were standing to one side, "you have it here?"

"Aye Master."

"Good! We will have need of it."

"What are your intentions?" Jama-at asked.

"Those little men," Pratt answered coldly, "must be destroyed. Each and every one of them. I don't think I'm wrong when I say that any attack by the means you possess will do any good. The stone men are immune to your weapons. But in that truck is a weapon that none of them can withstand. And all the men I'll need will be the Moglu."

"You mean," Komu broke in, in a somewhat querulous tone, "that you won't need us?"

Pratt nodded gravely.

Komu's face showed his disappointment.

"If I don't succeed," Pratt said in grim reminder, "you will have your fill of fighting. I don't think that they will stop with that first attack. From what I overheard, they want what you possess very much."

Komu sighed heavily and turned to

look into each face around the table, Satisfied with what he saw, he turned to Pratt and said:

"Very well, Earthman. Go with our hopes and blessings. We will follow. And if you do not succeed, then..."

Once more Pratt nodded. Then gesturing for the giants to follow, he strode from the room.

THE TRUCK rode with its familiar smoothness. Pratt felt slightly uncomfortable. His body was not as limber in the state it was in as when it was of flesh. One of the giants rode in his seat behind the cabin. The other was driving. The Earth which had illuminated their ride for the most part had already disappeared. The half-darkness of the land was enveloping them. The Jannsi stronghold was not far off.

Pratt asked what had been on his mind ever since he had heard the Moglu discuss the situation back in the cave:

"Tell me," he asked, "why didn't you warn the people what the Jannsi were planning?"

The giant turned and regarded him soberly. Shaking his head, he answered:

"It would have done no good. In the first place, we didn't know exactly what they were planning. We knew of the cave and brought you to it deliberately to hear your reaction to what was within. As a matter of fact, my brother and I had brought many of them into that hiding place. And that is not the only one. They have two more such. But to get back to you, we thought or rather hoped that somehow you would find the way to circumvent them. As it turned out we were wrong. We forgot that you were susceptible to hypnotism.

"Then, when we finally learned what was behind the whole thing, it

was too late. For even if we warned Komu and his allies, the fact that the Jannsi held you and Laeri captive would make them regard us and our motives with suspicion. Therefore, we decided simply to say that you had been taken prisoner and take our chances that the battle would resolve in our favor."

"Well," Pratt said grimly. "if my plan goes through, we can stop worrying about those jerks. And I hope that they have all their petrified friends with them when we get there."

The giant had an idea of Pratt's intention. But since he would not elaborate on his thoughts, the giant kept his peace. Then they were before the shallow, circular valley of the Jannsi. The Moglu braked the truck to a gentle and silent stop. There was a difference in the appearance of the place this time. The whole valley was aglow with light, light in the torches held by thousands of the petrified warriors. The whole valley was filled with them. And they could see that the small houses of the Jannsi had been transformed into beehives of industry. The little men kept running in and out like ants.

"Not a moment too soon," Pratt said. "I've an idea that they're getting ready to move. All right. Here's what I want you to do. Remember what we did to the village of At-tu? I checked the guage back at Stamat and we have a little better than twenty thousand gallons left. Your brother and I'll hold the hoses and let the gas drain out while you drive. Go like hell! We've got to circle the whole damned valley."

THEN, WHILE the giant drove, Pratt and the other Moglu let the precious gas drain. Pratt's heart stayed in his mouth all through the

tortuous trip. A single spark could set the gasoline aflame prematurely and provide a flaming, horrible coffin for them. The stench of it was overpowering. Already the Jannsi had noticed the odor and had come out to investigate. By that time, they had made a complete circuit of the valley.

Pratt leaped from the truck. The two giants gathered about him. His grin was a terrible thing as he looked at the gas soaked valley. Then it faded from his lips as he realized that all his planning would go for naught. The matches he had intended to use were in one of his pants pockets. And they were encased by an impregnable stone garment. There was only one other means in which he could get the gas to explode.

"Wait here for me!" he commanded, as he got back into the cab.

He stepped on the motor and putting it into gear, stepped on the gas. Nothing happened. Once more he stepped on the gas. Nothing happened. And he realized that with a truckload of gas, he had forgotten to put any into the tank. And there was no way of getting any in even if he had any left in the truck.

There was a single way left for him. The slope of the valley was its steepest at this point. The stone ramparts of the Jannsi were only a hundred yards off. If he could get the truck to roll that far and it would strike against the house there was bound to be at least a spark. Perhaps enough to set off an explosion. He stuck his head out of the cab and shouted:

"Push the truck down into the valley!"

It took only a moment. The giants' strength was immense. And coupled with the emergency of the situation, it was more than enough. The truck began to roll, gathering speed as the

slope increased. Gasoline splashed in waves from the hose-dropped radiator, as though it were the prow of a boat.

Then he was on the first rank of stone men—and through them. They were in ranks ten deep. But it was as if they were ten pins before the bowling ball of the truck. Pratt offered up a prayer of thankfulness that it was not a passenger car he was in. The very weight of the truck was sufficient to carry it through.

There was no time for thinking, then. The dwelling of the Jannsi looked ahead. Pratt twisted the wheel over until the truck was heading straight for it—and leaped from the cab. He was running as fast as he could toward the safety of the valley rim even before the truck struck.

NEVER IN all his life did Pratt ever imagine such a burst of sound could be possible. The very earth quaked from the explosion. A solid sheet of flame leaped sky high when the truck struck. And instantly the whole valley became a sea of flame.

Events moved with all the rapidity of a fast motion picture and all his impressions were viewed as through a kaleidoscope. Suddenly, he had become lighter. His leaps were higher, farther. And as he passed and jumped the men of stone, he was horrified to discover that they were shedding their casings. So with the sound of the holocaust there was added that of men screaming in maddening pain. They were torches running madly about. And futilely, for there was no escape.

Pain swept over Pratt. Excruciating pain! And he saw that where his feet landed and nowhere was there an escape from it, was a lake of fire, several feet deep. The armor he wore was a protecting factor for a few seconds. Then the intense heat be-

came felt in a horrible fashion. It was as if he was encased in a furnace.

Madly, with all the remaining strength of his will and body he leaped in huge strides for the rim of the valley. Fire fell from him at every step. His mind whirled and seemed to shrivel in the cap of his skull. The pain grew unendurable. Worse, he became afraid to breathe. Then he saw the figures of the two giants, tense in waiting, watching with bated breath his race with death. Summoning the last ounce of strength, he reached the top with a great bound, a bound that seemed to burst the blood vessels in his throat. He struck heavily, rolled once or twice and lay still.

"TELL ME," Maeri said. "Now that the Jannsi have been wiped out, what are you going to do?"

Pratt, looking like a well-wrapped mummy, slid his arm carefully around her waist. He winced slightly. Hearing the sound, she asked in concern: "Does it still hurt?"

"Honey," he said, laughter in his voice. "When I've got my arm around you, nothing bothers me...except you."

The girl smiled shyly and looked up at the great ball of the Earth, floating in the empyrean reaches of the heavens. He followed her glance and for a moment became speculative. It was the strangest adventure, the

most unbelievable adventure, that could ever have happened. There floating in space was all that he knew of home. Upon that planet were associations that were part of his... what? They seemed so meaningless now. They were meaningless! This and only this was real. This girl! Those giants who had beat out with their bare hands the flames in which he was wrapped. Who had carried him in their arms as if he were a baby and with as much care, until they reached Stamat and the unguents which saved his life.

He looked at the Earth and knew that he would never go back there. He blinked his eyes rapidly. The Earth...it seemed to be growing in size. It was! The girl's voice seemed to come from a vast distance.

"Darling! What's wrong?"

There was no time to be lost. Wordlessly, he whirled her back into the room.

"Nothing, baby," he answered shakily. "Nothing anymore. Not since I've found you. Tell me honey, do you think your father could use a good truck driver? That is if he had a truck?"

She retreated from him for a few steps. Then he had her close once more and closed off any more questions, by pressing his lips firmly but gently on hers. It was to prove the most effective way of stopping her questions.

THE END

★ UNDERGROUND HEATING SYSTEM ★

By JOHN DUNN

YOU WOULD probably be surprised to visit Reykjavik, capital of Iceland, and see no smoke in the sky even though it is a city of 50,000 people. One reason for the lack of smoke would be that there are few factories and no railroad in the city, but the main reason is that their homes, schools, and office buildings are all heated by the

boiling water of their country's natural hot springs. The hot water is piped into the city by a huge plant which pumps eighty-one gallons of water per second into Reykjavik's storage tanks. The pipes are so well insulated that little of the heat is wasted and when it reaches the radiators and faucets in the city, it is only fifteen degrees below the boiling point.

DANTE AND THE DEVIL

By LEE OWENS



ONE OF THE greatest fantasies ever written has unfortunately been read by too few people. Dante's *Divina Commedia* is a fantasy heavily laced with religion. In those parts of the *Commedia* such as the *Inferno*, such as *Purgatory*, the imagination of the man ran riot. If the story were couched in modern language and told perhaps a little less intensely it would be a real thriller. As it is, it is a terrifying document.

In particular Dante's description of Hell leaves us with the shuddery feeling that of that's what it's like, we'll be good—and how!

Hell is described as being a huge pit tapering toward a narrow point at the bottom and lined with ledges. Each one of these ledges or levels contains appropriate punishment apparatus for varying types of sinners. And here Dante lets his mind run riot. For example, on the third level lay the sinners of Gluttony. They are lying in mud and icy water with bitter winds blowing over them, all the while Cerberus, a gigantic dog-headed man barks at them and tears chunks out of their hides!

All the conceivable sins of man are classified for each level and progressively worse punishments are devised the deeper one descends into the nether regions. Embezzlers for example are forced to dive into alikes of boiling pitch, guarded by black-winged demons carrying prongs. At the Thieves level, the guilty change from sinners to serpents and back to sinners again, the cycle going on forever. The Evil Counsellors are made into dancing flames. And so throughout the entire narrative lavish punishments are contrived for each type of sin and sinner. Finally Dante

visits the very Pit of Hell itself which is reserved for what is regarded as the worst sin—treachery. This part of Hell is called Judecca after Judas, the greatest betrayer of them all.

Here on the plain composed of ice and shrouded in hideous darkness stands the Arch-Fiend himself, Satan, chomping between his fearsome jaws three traitors at a time. With each bite he spreads his bat wings and sends bitter winds across the barren plain. It is the epitome of Hell!

There is a peculiar and romantic touch for the first level of Hell which merely houses the souls of the great pagans like the Greek poets and so on. The second level of Hell holds the punishment of guilty lovers. The lovers are there, but not in each others arms—instead a wind blows them about endlessly, out of reach of each other and all that can be heard is their moaning and sighing. It is pitiful and tragic.

From The bowels of Hell, Dante goes up into Purgatory which has severe punishments too but which is located in the open air. Here the minor sinners expiate their modest crimes. And from Purgatory Dante ascends into Heaven where of course, all is beautiful and glorious.

This allegorical tale in spite of its age is interesting for the sheer fantastic elements it holds. While it is regarded as a literary masterpiece, it is rather dull to wade through. It would be interesting if it could be put in modern dress, for some of the ideas make many horror stories look like fairy tales in comparison. Even the inscription which Dante sees across the gates is frightening, "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here..."

FARMER'S LITTLE HELPER

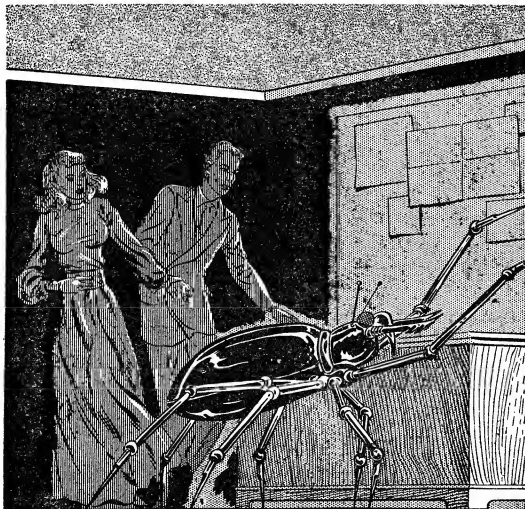
By CARTER T. WAINWRIGHT



BREEDING earthworms is a new and ever-expanding business. There are already at least a dozen large, commercial earthworm farms in the United States besides many individual breeders who are supplying worms to farmers who wish to turn barren land into productive acres. As the earthworm tunnels through the ground, eating bits of vegetable matter along the way, it performs a valuable service to the plant life. It plows close to the roots, mak-

ing little underground canals for the rain-water and air and making more room for the roots to grow. As he plows along, he casts off waste material on top of the ground. This substance builds up the topsoil and makes it more fertile. In rich ground there is an average of a million earthworms to an acre, and their waste materials on top of the ground amounts to around twenty tons each year.

THE END



The MYSTERY of ELEMENT 117

By MILTON K. SMITH

When an element is too unstable to exist, but does exist, where could it be? There's only one place, the fourth dimension. But could a human being live there?



A shot sounded out in the hall. Then the door swung open violently.

JERRY CHANE dozed in the great barrel chair, his feet resting on a stool that held them about even with his lax head. His black hair was mussed, his tanned face badly in need of a shave. The collar of his white shirt was unbuttoned, the knot of the hand-painted tie carelessly askew.

The chair and Jerry Chane were in a corner of a large room—about twenty-five feet. In the center of the room was an expensive desk with nothing

on its glistening surface.

Bookshelves and filing cabinets took up the space along one wall, windows a second wall. The frosted glass door and four by eight fibre board occupied a third wall.

Through the frosted glass of the door could be seen the reversed lettering of the simple announcement. "Jerry Chane." Above it was the number 305.

The fibre board had half a dozen typewritten sheets held in place by

thumb tacks. Most of the typing was mathematical equations, typed with an engineering typewriter.

Along the full length of the fourth wall was a work bench backed by a panel on which hung neat rows of tools and several shelves filled with mason jars that had small copper parts in them. Underneath the long work bench were banks of shallow drawers.

In one of these cubbyholes under the bench a large black spider crouched motionless. That is, it looked like a spider and its glittering dark eyes seemed alive. Its body was as big as that of a chicken and its inch-thick legs would have straightened out to a full three feet in length apiece if they were not gracefully curved to support the huge body.

If it were a spider it was of no species of spiders known on Earth—or for that matter, any other place in the universe other than Jerry's mind and workshop.

It was a robot shaped like a spider. Jerry had built it to act as a body-guard, and put into it reflexes that would cause it to attack anything that entered the room. When he slept the robot's reflexes acted and the spider stood guard.

When he was awake he could control it verbally or by a pocket radio. The word "quiet" shut off its reflexes. After nearly losing his life once when he fell asleep without turning on the spider's reflexes, he had fixed it so that his breathing while asleep would activate its reflexes so it could protect him.

He had built it in the shape of a giant spider because a man is more afraid of that shape than any other—especially if it is unbelievably large and springing through the air with its glistening eyes and clashing man-

dibles. The sight of it would paralyze the most daring of marauders automatically, leaving them wide open.

While Jerry slept the robot lurked under the workbench, its eyes taking in the whole room, its legs motionless until some sudden movement would cause them to spring.

JERRY'S ears suddenly brought him the sound of someone or something landing on the floor with a light thud. His eyes flashed open in time to see his spider crossing the floor rapidly, a girl standing near the desk. Her eyes widened in terror and a scream passed her lips. Then she was clumsily fumbling with something at a wide red belt that circled her waist.

"Quiet," Jerry said quickly.

The spider froze where he was and kept his eyes on the figure of the girl. She looked fearfully from the spider to Jerry and back to the spider again. Concluding that she was safe for the moment she calmed down, but her finger stayed on a button of her belt that looked like an ornamental stud—one of several that dotted the red leather around her waist.

Without moving from his relaxed position Jerry's eyes appraised her slowly. She was blonde, with generous tresses that looked like they had just been worked on by an expensive hairdresser. Her cream colored dress was of the latest style; throat-hugging neck and pleated skirt, with form-fitting tailoring in between. Loose sleeves hid the shape of her arms down to the wrist where they were pleated into a tight cuff.

The hands were long and slender, the fingers looking as though they might belong to a musician or a typist.

Jerry's eyes came back to the face and settled there. The firm chin and flawless skin were set off by a nice

nose and deep blue eyes, framed in dark lashes. Her age couldn't be more than twenty or twenty-two.

Jerry's eyes glanced quickly at the closed and locked door, then back to her face again. A puzzled frown formed a crease between his eyes.

"How did you get in?" he asked, without moving from the position he had been in while he slept.

"You are Jerry Chane?" she asked, ignoring his question.

He nodded briefly. She opened her mouth and closed it again as if hesitating about what to say next.

"How did you get past the locked door and burglar alarm?"

"I didn't come in through the door."

"I suppose you came up through the floor," Jerry said, an amused smile playing about his lips.

"In a way I did," she replied. She returned his smile, and he noticed with approval the way her nose crinkled when she smiled.

Jerry dropped his feet from the stool and stood up, stretching.

"Back," he said tonelessly. The spider turned around and went back under the bench. The girl watched it with wide eyes. Involuntarily she shuddered.

Her eyes returned to Jerry who stood politely waiting for her next move.

"I'm Gertrude Mouru," she said. "I—we need your help."

Her eyes flashed him a single, pleading look, then were hidden by the dark lashes.

"Mouru," Jerry said thoughtfully. "Seems to me I've heard that name before. The House of Mouru. No, not in the newspapers. Some book, I think. Something about it being mysterious and older than history or something." He chuckled. "You don't look older than history, Miss Mouru; or should I say Mrs. Mouru?"

"Just call me Gertrude. I'm Miss Mouru, of course," she said with a sudden show of friendliness. Then she seemed to sink back underneath the air of fear and anxiety that hovered around her like an aura.

"What's the trouble?" Jerry asked.

"I can't tell you," Gertrude replied.

"It's my brother. He sent me."

"I remember now!" Jerry said, snapping his fingers. He went over to the bookcase and searched quickly, pulling a book out from one of the shelves.

The title page carried the legend, "Study of the function, $f(x,y,z,i,w,t)$ ". The author's name was Frank Mouru with a string of degrees following it.

APPARENTLY ignoring the girl, Jerry thumbed through its pages, his mind recalling the details of the contents which he had thoroughly mastered a few years previously.

When his eyes lifted from the book they held a new look of comprehension.

"So you *did* come up through the floor!" he exclaimed.

"You might call it that," she said.

"But I think you know that I must have come into the three-space of this room from a three-space adjacent to it where there wasn't a room."

"Yes, I know," Jerry murmured, returning the book to its place on the shelf. He walked slowly over to his desk and sat down on it, one leg reaching down to the floor.

"Well," he said, "What comes next? Do I get an explanation or am I supposed to follow you blindly someplace and learn what it's all about from your brother?"

Jerry took out a pack of cigarettes and offered Gertrude one. She accepted it. Jerry took one for himself and snapped his lighter open.

He watched Gertrude's face closely as she leaned forward and lit her

cigarette. Her hands were trembling almost imperceptibly and there were faint traces of tenseness about her mouth.

"Frank told me that if you had heard of him and his work I should tell you as much as I can," she said after taking a deep drag on the cigarette. "After he wrote that book he kept on along the lines he laid down for research. I don't know much about it except what he has seen fit to tell me from time to time. You probably know more about the theory than I ever could, Mr. Chane."

"Don't call me Mr. Chane," Jerry said with a laugh. "It makes me feel like I was old enough to be your father."

"All right, Jerry," Gertrude said smiling. "As you probably know Frank believed that space is four dimensional. He was convinced that the substance out of which our three-space universe is composed extends a small distance in an out-space direction; that is, matter is four dimensional. Not very much so, though. I think my brother's words to demonstrate his idea were that a common brick is two by four by eight inches in our space, and perhaps a ten millionth of an inch thick in the fourth dimension."

"Yes," Jerry said impatiently. "I gathered all that from his book. He thought that this four dimensional nature of matter could be gotten hold of in some way so that an object could be moved completely out of our three-space along the fourth dimension, and then back in again. How, he didn't know. He concluded his book with the words, 'Any successful attempt to move an object along the fourth dimension must come as the result of a thrust from some other three-space in physical contact with ours. I gather he was successful or you couldn't have come into a room

out of thin air. If he thinks I could help him in a technological capacity, however, he'd better get someone else. I have my own private research."

HE NODDED toward the spider lurking suspiciously under the workbench and grinned. Gertrude looked at it and shuddered again.

"No," she said, "he doesn't need any help like that. It's something too big for him to handle. I don't know what it is myself. In reaching into the fourth dimension he opened the way to something he never dreamed of. He—he told me not to tell you more than that. He said you would have to see for yourself to believe it."

"Why didn't he come himself?"

Jerry asked.

Gertrude's face colored becomingly. Then she smiled at Jerry.

"He said you were more likely to fall for a pretty face than a mystery," she said banteringly. "Anyway, he didn't dare leave the—"

She came to a stop abruptly and, from the expression on her face, she had almost said too much.

Jerry grinned at her.

"So my reputation gets around!" he said banteringly. "Does your brother expect me—oh, to—?"

Gertrude reached inside her blouse and extracted a long envelope, and handed it to Jerry without speaking. He opened it and took out a thin sheaf of bills. There were ten one thousand dollar bills. Jerry whistled an off key melody while he examined them carefully.

"That's a retainer," Gertrude said hastily. "There will be more—much more, before the thing is through, if you succeed. If you don't you won't have much need of money."

"I see," Jerry said tonelessly. "I like that, huh?"

"Yes," Gertrude answered vaguely. "It's pretty bad."

Jerry walked around his desk, his eyes on the floor and his hands in his pockets. He stopped again in front of Gertrude.

"Look," he said. "When anyone offers me ten thousand dollars it's generally because they think I can get them a lot more than that or save them a lot more than that. Most people don't offer that much right off the bat to prevent themselves from getting killed. The average voluntary retainer from a guy who thinks he might get murdered is only around five hundred. When it goes above that it's generally connected with money."

He stopped, waiting for some comment from her.

"Will you stop hedging?" Gertrude said in exasperation.

"It seems to me you're the one that's doing the stalling," Jerry said coldly. "You haven't even mentioned how I'm going to meet your brother, or where. You haven't told me what I'll be expected to do either. Am I to find someone? Am I to fight someone? Will I need a gun or just a notebook? Money talks, but in this case I think it needs an interpreter. I don't happen to be short right at the moment, so I may seem a little unreasonable in closing my eyes and grabbing the bait without quibbling."

"Please," she said, giving Jerry that appealing look once more. Then she added, "I'm sorry. I should have been more explicit. Frank said to give you this money and get you to agree to see him. He will explain the whole thing to you himself. All you have to agree to do is come with me and see him."

"That sounds more reasonable," Jerry said. He walked across the room and unlocked a drawer under the work bench. Inside was a metal box. He lifted the lid and laid the

currency in on top of a small pile of other money. Then he dropped the lid and slid the drawer back in place, locking it once more.

A SHOT sounded out in the hall. The shot blended into the sound of shattering wood and metal. The frosted glass panel of the door cracked and the knob jumped visibly. Then the door swung open violently.

"Quick," Gertrude exclaimed. She jumped to Jerry's side and took hold of his hand just as the door opened, revealing three men with guns pointed through the door.

Then she fumbled with a stud on her red leather belt. A shot rang out. Then the room faded from view.

For an awful instant Jerry felt like he was in the vacuum of outer space. The air rushed from his lungs. Then he was gulping in cool air and looking down on the city from a dizzy height.

The city seemed hazy, as though it might be a structure of cellophane that was only semitransparent. His eyes could see through the buildings and quite a distance into the ground underneath.

It solidified for several seconds, then grew hazy again. But it grew closer now. Gertrude still kept a firm grip on his hand.

The ground came slowly upward until they were only a few feet above it. Sewer and water pipes appeared under the street and sidewalk as they might if viewed through a super x-ray.

Just as the two seemed about to sink through the sidewalk the ground became normal. Jerry felt his feet land with about the force they would have if he had jumped a foot off the ground and fell back.

A sallow complexioned youth was half a block away, walking toward them. He stopped, then seemed to

change his mind. He turned around and started walking. After a few steps he looked back over his shoulder and then started running. At the first corner he disappeared, still running.

Gertrude chuckled. "He probably thinks he saw a ghost," she said.

"How did we get out here?" Jerry asked, his mind still whirling from the many strange sensations it had experienced in rapid succession.

"I didn't have time to tell you," Gertrude said. "When I took your hand you became attached to the dematerializer with me. What really happened was that we moved just far enough in the fourth dimension to clear the depth of the building. It had to be that far or we couldn't have gotten out of the room and escaped getting killed. As soon as we were clear I moved us back to where we could breathe again. Meanwhile in those few seconds the curvature of the earth had apparently lifted us up a thousand feet, although we were just moving in a straight line along the direction we had been moving in space at the instant we dematerialized. By materializing judiciously and allowing gravity to pull us back we landed here. That's all there is to it."

"Yeah. I see," Jerry said dryly. "Simple when you see it, isn't it?"

"My car is downtown," Gertrude said. "We can catch a bus and pick it up, then go to where Frank is."

"First we're going back and see how much damage those boys did," Jerry said determinedly. "By the way, just why did they come? Are they connected in any way with you?"

"I don't know," Gertrude said worriedly. "The—forces fighting us could very well have made them try to kill us. I never saw those men be-

fore, though."

Jerry grunted.

A bus came down the street and pulled into the curb. Jerry and Gertrude climbed aboard.

AT THE building that housed Jerry's office several police cars were clustered around the entrance. Jerry took Gertrude's arm and pushed through the crowd. The elevator boy's eyes were large and round.

"Gee, Mr. Chane," he said. "Some gangsters were shooting in your office. They're all dead. Lucky you weren't there or they might have killed you."

The elevator came to a stop at the third floor and they stepped out. The elevator boy opened the door just enough for them to get through, then closed it quickly.

In the hall several policemen were standing in front of 305 with guns drawn, an air of fear about them.

Jerry walked up to them, a tight grin plucking at the corners of his mouth.

"This your office?" one of them said hoarsely. Jerry nodded and stepped past him.

The door was open. Inside three men lay motionless on the floor. Atop one of them was the shattered remains of the spider robot.

A look of frustrated rage entered Jerry's eyes. One of the policemen was speaking.

"We shot the spider thing," he was saying apologetically. "The elevator boy told us afterward it was a mechanical gadget of yours, but we thought it was alive at the time. The three dead men are hoodlums. We know them down at police headquarters. Lucky you weren't here. They have been suspected of being professional killers for a long time, but we never got enough on them to put them away."

Jerry's eyes had been on the dead men. Now he looked at the policeman.

"Before you leave make sure the building manager has a new door put on, will you?" he asked. "Leave the remains of the spider here. I may be able to salvage part of him to build

"Yes, sir," the policeman said respectfully. "Good thing you weren't here or we would have to hold you."

"I realize that," Jerry said, walking toward the elevator. "I'll see you when I get back. That should be in a couple of hours if everything goes all right."

GERTRUDE'S car was only a block from the building. She settled down in the driver's seat and started the car without speaking. In twenty minutes it reached the city limits and rolled along a state highway, picking up speed.

Half an hour later she turned the car off the highway onto a driveway leading into a conventional looking rural residence. The landscaping had that look that only a professional landscape gardner can produce. The white shiplap bungalow was an architect's dream.

Gertrude stopped the car in the driveway, braking to a stop, cutting the motor and climbing out almost in one smooth motion. Jerry was right behind her when she stopped on the front porch and fumbled through her blouse pocket for a key.

Before she could find it the door opened, revealing a man who was perhaps thirty, with coal black hair and a deep tan. On first glance he looked like an American who has spent some time in Florida. On second glance he looked like an Englishman who has spent most of his life in India. On third glance he looked like someone from the middle East with a mixture

of oriental and Hindu blood in him. Then he seemed to be a blend of all three impressions.

Jerry remembered a little more about him now that he saw him. This was Frank—a throwback to the ancestors of the Mouru line, a family that had played mysterious roles in the secret history of the development of the middle east.

A Mouru several generations back had taken a handsome British girl for one of his wives. One of his descendants had married an American girl on a visit to the United States.

The grandfather had done the same, but the father had married a native girl. Frank had all the physical and mental characteristics of his eastern ancestors. His sister, Gertrude, had taken the occidental appearance.

The article on the House of Mouru had said that the Mouru line was reputed to go back seven or eight thousand years. It painted Frank as a mysterious figure who swept through American colleges and grasped the most intricate of sciences with incredible ease. Fabulously rich, he had kept a staff of tutors almost as large as the staff of professors at the University he attended. One of the professors had said that he felt more like a child explaining nonsense to an adult than a professor when he taught, with Frank's large, deep, oriental eyes upon him and his quiet reserve which was broken only occasionally to ask penetrating questions—questions to which he seemed to know the answers and which invariably gave the professor a greater insight into his own subject than he had had before.

After graduation Frank had returned to the Orient. To Tibet, some had said. From time to time a book would appear under his name, or an article would appear in some journal. Each time the subject matter would

shake the scientific world. The man himself had remained hidden—perhaps in some Tibetan temple, the author of the article had hinted.

And here he was in the United States, standing in the doorway of a conventional house, a smile on his face as he welcomed Jerry and invited him to step inside!

JERRY followed Gertrude in and watched Frank as he crossed the room hastily and put his eyes to what looked something like a telescope. After a hasty glance in the thing he turned away from it and flashed Jerry another smile.

"Would you like a drink?" he asked pleasantly.

At Jerry's nod he crossed to a liquor cabinet. Jerry noticed that the liquor cabinet was one of the very latest with refrigerated mixer dispensers in it.

"Rum and coke. Two jiggers," Jerry said.

"An interesting drink," Frank said as he prepared it. He mixed two other drinks, then brought the three glasses over to where Jerry and Gertrude were standing. His footsteps were noiseless on the thick rug.

"I suppose you are overflowing with curiosity," he said, sipping his drink. "After you have caught your breath a little I'll explain what it is all about. That is, I will if we aren't interrupted."

He walked over to the telescope thing again and looked through it, humming a tune under his breath.

Gertrude sank down in a deep chair and kept her eyes on her glass.

Jerry stood where he was, his eyes roving over the room, studying everything in sight. They kept returning to the telescope. It began like an ordinary telescope, but its large end seemed to blend off into nothingness. It was pointed toward a wall, and if

its large end had been solid it could have only brought an enlargement of the wallpaper to the eyepiece.

Jerry remembered his trip from his office with Gertrude and surmised that this was a telescope for looking into other three-spaces.

There was danger—so all this implied. It must be danger from some other three space. Was it directed only at Frank? Or was it a threat to the world? Jerry cursed Frank's casual appearance under his breath.

Frank straightened from the telescope and turned back to Jerry.

"I think things will be safe enough for the time being," he said. "So I'll tell you a little of what you're getting into." He picked up a light chair and turned it backward, then sat down on it, his legs straddling the back and his arms resting across the top.

"You have read my book on the family of the e-spaces?" he began. At Jerry's nod he continued. "Several years ago I began to get experimental results from my theory. The first seemed to be more or less accidental. I built a viewer somewhat like the one over there. Sometimes it would work a little, then it wouldn't.

"I won't go into the details of it right now except to say that back in the mountains of Tibet I built a big atomics lab and synthesized element number 117. It belonged to the iron-nickel family and was highly magnetic, with one peculiar difference. A bar of it made a single pole magnet!

"It's chemical properties were much like those of silicon. Its oxide made a glasslike substance which still had the single pole magnetic property. When made into a lens and subjected to a conventional magnetic field it opened up vision in the fourth dimension! I don't mean four dimensional images, but three dimensional images, in our space, of scenes in

other three-spaces adjacent to ours.

"Later on I found that two like poles of 117 metal repelled each other in the fourth dimension, and could be incorporated into a gadget that would actually pull or push a person out of our three-space and into another. I'll tell you more about that later. Right now I want to tell you what I found out about the three-spaces adjacent to ours and in functional contact with ours.

"In rough outline they are universes much like our own, so far as matter and laws of nature are concerned. Gravity is a strictly three-space phenomenon and very thin in fourth dimensional depth. You can still encounter obstruction from dense matter when you have moved far enough to get away from weight."

"THAT explains something," Jerry interrupted. "Gertrude switched us in the fourth dimension to escape some thugs. When we were moving through the building I experienced the feeling I rather imagine I would get in a complete vacuum. I wondered about it."

"You were in a complete vacuum," Frank said. "She had to move the two of you more than a ten millionth of an inch out of our three-space to clear the material of the building. Then, as soon as she was sure she was clear, she came back close enough so that you could breathe."

He went back to the telescope and peered into it for a minute, then returned to his chair and went on talking.

"After I built the first four dimensional viewscope," he said, "I spent some time just exploring with it. You are going to snort at what I'll tell you now, but go ahead. Later you will find it out for yourself.

"One of the first things I found out was that there are people by the

millions in the three-spaces close to ours! I watched them, traveling around over the world with my sister so as to study all different types of people on the other side.

"I found many of them living in communities much like our own, with schools, buildings, and civilization. But I found that a large percentage of the populations in the three-spaces closest to ours were disorganized and were usually nothing more than roving bands of degenerates.

"The many peculiar things I discovered would fill a thick book! Underneath, my mind was mulling over the coincidence of human beings in many different three-spaces. I rejected mere coincidence at once; but how else explain it?

"One day the whole problem settled itself quite naturally. I saw a man in another three-space whom I had known in our own—and he had died quite some time before!

"THE whole picture burst into my realization like an atom bomb. What I was looking at was the so called spirit world! Oh, I know you won't believe me at first. I didn't want to believe it either. But then a lot of things clicked into place. Too many to mention now.

"I had rigged up my viewscope so that it could be extended quite a way in the fourth dimension. Now I turned it on Gertrude and extended it. I found that she was quite thick in the fourth dimension—much thicker than was necessary to exist also in the spirit plane, but that her appearance changed as the scope moved deeper, until finally she didn't look human at all.

"I turned the scope on these humans that I now knew to be spirits and found that they were also thick in the fourth dimension. I turned the scope on a chicken finally and found

it to be thicker than a brick, for example, but not as thick as a man. For the final experiment I watched it through the scope while a fellow killed it for me. He cut off its head with a sharp knife. Only the chicken in our three-space died. It peeled off from the four dimensional chicken like a celophane wrapper. The chicken was left intact and alive in a three-space so close to ours that our matter is fairly solid in it yet.

"Inside of half an hour this spirit chicken died also, but it had demonstrated something. I now knew beyond any shadow of doubt that all the millions of people I saw through the viewscope had once lived on Earth! They had material bodies just as surely as we do, but in a three-space just far enough away from ours so that to us they are non-existent except to those whose awareness extends slightly into the fourth dimension.

"My viewscope, of course, brought four-dimensional vision within the range of my normal sight, but I recalled all the stories of people called psychics and mystics and seers, who can see to some extent four-dimensionally."

Frank stopped talking and went back to the scope again. He noticed Jerry's glass was empty and filled it again before sitting down.

"At once the possibilities of the thing were apparent. I had been playing with the idea of using the element 117 some way to actually transpose my body to some other three-space. I had the theory pretty well worked out, so I went to work at once building the gadget. Gertrude has one on right now. So have I.

"My intention was to go into the so-called spirit planes and find old friends and bring them back with me. For example, my dad. He died when Gertrude and I were still kids. If I

could find him I would bring him back.

"Other possibilities came to me. When I die I can merely bring my spirit body into this three-space and keep on as before. Death is no longer the end of things!

"Well, I finished my fourth dimension belts. I made several of them until I had used up all of element 117 that I had. My plant in Tibet is still turning the stuff out, but it can make only a few ounces a year.

"I put the first belt on a dog and pressed the button. Then I watched him through the viewscope. He made it all right, but since he didn't know about stopping he's still going, so far as I know. He's dead and in an interstellar space, still moving in the fourth dimension through three-space after three-space.

"I watched his progress and satisfied myself that it wouldn't kill me to make the trip myself, provided that I could stop before I left atmosphere.

"GERTRUDE watched through the viewscope when I made the trip. She had a belt on too, just in case. Everything worked out satisfactorily. I think you will understand when I say that from then on life was very fascinating. I would get whole shelves of books on spirit manifestations and read them, and then incorporate the ideas in them into my study to broaden my understanding and complete the vague theory they expounded.

"I found that some spirits can develop along certain lines until by an effort of will they can move to this plane. They materialize and walk among men, as one book put it. Well, I materialized and walked among spirits. None of them guessed that I wasn't dead. They accepted me as one of them for a long time.

"Everything went fine up to two-weeks ago. I was walking along the countryside not far from this spot when I was surprised by a band of cutthroats in the three-space that is generally referred to as the lower astral. They stripped me completely. Gertrude saw what was happening, but knew that she would be no match for them. She waited until they left, then came over into that three-space and brought me back.

"That gang of cutthroats, however, had my belt. In the excitement of the moment Gertrude didn't think to keep track of them."

"I see what you're driving at now," Jerry exclaimed. "This gang discovered how to work the belt and materialize on our hyperplane space, or three-space, and are carrying on their depredations, escaping back into the lower astral where they can thumb their noses at the law!"

"Exactly!" Frank said. "They are handicapped by only having one belt. The one that wears it can take only one other with him, then return and get another. That takes time."

Jerry began to chuckle.

"What are you laughing at?" Gertrude asked.

"I was just thinking," Jerry said. "I gather that those fellows that my robot spider killed were the materialized bodies of dead gangsters. When the police fingerprint them they'll find they have three corpses of men who probably died in the electric chair long ago!"

"It's more of a mystery than that to them," Frank said. "There have been several bank robberies lately, and the police get only fingerprints that check in the file of dead criminals. I've been present just outside our three-space and listened to them. They think some crook is playing with them by leaving plastic finger impressions for them. Naturally they

couldn't draw the, to them, insane conclusion that dead people are the culprits!"

"What a screwy mess," Jerry said, shaking his head. "I suppose what we have to do is find this gang and take their belt away from them. And I suppose that is why you called me in."

"Exactly," Frank exclaimed. "But there is immediate danger. The leader of this gang is a fellow called Blacky. He's smart. As soon as he found out how to work the belt he rightly surmised that I was a living person and that there were more belts. Come over and look through the scope and you'll see what we're up against."

Jerry sprang to his feet. He had been restraining his desire to look through the scope since he came in.

H E SAW A landscape slightly different than the one he knew existed in ordinary three-space. Scattered around were perhaps twenty vicious looking men, each with a gun, and each looking constantly around as if expecting something to appear.

"None of the have the belt," Frank said. "They are just preventing me from going into their three-space—or maybe hoping that I will so they can kill me and get another belt. They don't know about the viewscope. They think that I am as handicapped as they are, and must travel blindly.

"When Blacky decided to find me he brought them all over and they wandered the streets until one of them saw me one day. He followed me here. They have men posted all around the house in our three-space as well. They tried rushing the house and my burglar devices drove them off. I have invisible light circuits that set off gas to drive them away. If I were to try to get away they would follow me, and I might not be as safe someplace else. That's why I stay here."

Jerry went to a window and peeked out, being careful not to expose himself. After a moment he found a face staring at the house behind some thin shrubbery.

"Poltergeist," he said softly to himself.

"That's what they amount to," Frank said at his shoulder.

"One thing puzzles me," Jerry said, then added, "Among other things, that is. I've read your book and a lot of other treatises. According to you the fourth dimension is a space dimension just like the other three. Since direction is purely relative in space, how does it happen that a universe gets partitioned from others just like space were absolute in directions?"

"That's something that has bothered me, too," Frank admitted. "There is only one clue that I know of to account for it. That's the square root of minus one. It's used generally to indicate a magnitude at right angles to some direction, and a real number indicates a magnitude along the line.

"If we use ordinary symbology we have x , y , and z for the three dimensions, and i , the square root of minus one doesn't fit. But if we put it in anyway as, say, iu , we have a fourth dimension that is somewhat different than the other three in some way I can't quite fathom.

"What I'm driving at is simply this; momentum is the product of mass and velocity. Suppose that besides real mass, there is substance that has imaginary mass. It would have to have imaginary velocity too to have real momentum. There might be a natural segregation so that the whole four-dimensional universe is made up of stuff having real momentum. If that is so, then if all the stuff in our three-space has only real momentum it naturally is partitioned

into one hyperplane of hyperspace, or one three-space slice of four-space.

"The succeeding layers of three-space wouldn't be entirely independent. The imaginary mass stuff with imaginary velocities would serve as a connecting link among them. I think that must be so or when a person dies his astral body wouldn't separate from his mortal one and there wouldn't be an astral body. It is created by the interaction between the two three-spaces of the imaginary-mass stuff, whatever it is."

"Hmm," Jerry said thoughtfully. "How do you think element 117 functions to move matter out of one three-space into another?"

"I'm pretty sure there," Frank said. "It has a single magnetic pole. As you know, that has been proven impossible. Well, I've looked at the pure stuff through the scanner and found that it does have another pole in another three-space. The principle of the belt is to have a shield between two pieces of 117 of unequal size. When the shield between attract each other unequally, moving everything physically connected to them in the fourth dimension. The movement is stopped by putting the shield back in place. The movement is produced by the unequal attention of the two pieces."

"Ugh," Jerry grunted. "How do you reverse the process?"

"With two poles of the opposite polarity," replied Frank.

"Must not take very much," Jerry said, glancing approvingly at Gertrude's slim figure.

"It doesn't," Frank replied. "Both, or rather all four of the pieces are each smaller than a pea."

Jerry chuckled.

"My head's spinning around," he said. "And I don't know whether it's the rum cocktails or the larnin'."

"Probably a little of both," Gertrude said, laughing merrily. "Me, I don't even try to understand all that. It works like driving a car. You press one button and you go one way. Take your finger off and you stop. Press the other button and you go the opposite way, whatever that is. Take your finger off when you get back in terra firma and it stops the terra."

She looked mischievously at her brother and wrinkled her nose at him.

"I guess I'll have to join you at the foot of the class, Gertrude," Jerry said. "Too deep for me; but you can count me with you. We've got to get that belt or there's no telling what may happen. An invasion from the lower astral is what so-called spirit students have been prophesying for years. If that happened the living would be helpless!"

FRANK walked over to a picture hanging on a wall. He slid the picture aside revealing a small safe. He opened this and took out a red leather belt like the one Gertrude was wearing. He handed it to Jerry.

"Wear it under your shirt," he said gruffly. "The button on the right side takes you into the astral and the one on the left brings you back."

"What if you go back too far?" Jerry asked, pulling out his shirt and strapping the belt around his waist.

"For some reason," Frank said, "The spirit world all seems to be on one side, so to speak. The other side is full of queer scenery that twists at the mind. I'd advise you to leave it alone for the time being."

"Have you any ideas about a plan of action?" Jerry asked Frank.

"I thought I would leave that up to you," Frank replied. "After all, I'm not a man of action and you have a lot of experience in running down criminals and such. That's why I called you in. I didn't know who to

call on for help, and since I have unlimited resources money presented no obstacle. I picked the man who had the reputation of being tops in the field of tracking down criminals. You."

Jerry stood still, thinking. Finally he began to pace the floor. He gave that up and slouched down in a deep chair.

Gertrude and Frank left him alone and took turns watching through the viewscope.

Finally Jerry spoke.

"Our object," he said, "is to entice the wearer of the belt into exposing himself. We don't have to worry about killing him because he's already dead."

"That's right," Frank said. "He's very cautious because I've already tried. He stays out of sight on both planes and only helps his men through at a distance."

"We have one advantage over Blacky," Jerry said slowly. "With that viewscope we can see in both three-spaces, while he can only see in one at a time."

"That's true," Frank agreed. "But don't forget that Blacky has his men watching us on both sides. Obviously, if we left this house one of those men would go to some prearranged meeting place and inform Blacky. If we went into another three-space without leaving the house to do it, those men we see in the viewscope would give us the same problem."

"Unless we went the other way," Jerry said. "Since they don't have a viewscope we could go the other way in the fourth dimension and none of them would see us go. You said something about it twisting the mind or something to even look that way. What did you mean by that?"

"It can't be described," Frank said soberly. "I'll show you, though. After all, Gertrude and I have seen it.

There's no reason why you shouldn't, except that it is a very unnerving experience."

HE WENT over to the viewscope and made a careful adjustment on it. Then he stepped back and motioned Jerry to look through the eyepiece. Jerry hesitated long enough to drop his cigarette in an ash tray, then put his eyes to the viewscope.

The imaged landscape that met his eyes was predominantly a reddish violet shade. The instant he noticed this something whispered in his mind that the strange color was a true color—the next beyond the violet in the ultraviolet.

Several queer looking blobs floated above the strangely undulating earth with no visible support. Each was as large as a teakettle and vaguely resembled one with the spout pointed downward.

Vegetation was thick, but it defied description, being something like trees would be if their trunks and branches were translucent ropes of loosely twined, threadlike strands which came out from the main ropes as individual strands which floated upward out of sight, weaving in a way that seemed to be more thought-sound than visible image.

There were no men or animals; just strange, nausea-inducing blobs floating in a reddish-violet haze with a play of subtly varying color just under their surfaces that seemed to reach into Jerry's mind and twist painfully.

At last he jerked his eyes away from the viewscope and shook his head violently to shake off the depressing mood that the view had created in him.

His hands shook as he lit another cigarette and inhaled deeply.

"Did the scenery talk to you when you looked at it?" Jerry asked, look-

ing at Frank and Gertrude.

They nodded.

"Better let me fix you another drink," Gertrude said sympathetically.

"I could use a good stiff one after that experience," Jerry said.

HIS MIND was drawn, fascinated, to his strange experience. The other planes seemed much like our own. You saw things and they were objects, whether living or inanimate. In the plane he had just seen objects were something *more* than just objects. They had new colors which physiologically, was impossible. The eyes could only register the ordinary colors. If an ultraviolet radiation registered in the eyes it would have to do so as an ordinary color. That was proven fact.

Starting from that one fact—how reconcile it with actually seeing a new color?

Light reflected from objects and striking the eyes produces an image in the mind. Nothing more. The *meaning* of the image can produce an emotion of fear or terror or pleasure or anger. How then can an image that has no meaning produce an emotion?

Gertrude handed Jerry his drink. He took it absently, his eyes on the rug and his mind intent on the puzzle of what he had seen.

A sudden thought struck him.

"Look, Frank," he said. "You believe that the spirit that lives after death is more or less a three dimensional being in a hyper-plane close to ours, and functionally connected to the living person during life by means of this square-root-of-minus-one matter that acts between hyper-planes? And that at death this other body breaks free undamaged, to go on living with all the mental faculties of the man?"

"It seems obvious from what we

see over there," Frank replied.

"Well then," Jerry said, "What's to prevent a similar being from coming into existence from the other direction? What I mean is, suppose that with the living man there is an entity in one direction in the fourth dimension which we might call the low, or animal self; and in the other direction in the fourth dimension there is an entity called the high, or mental self. In other words, the subconscious self. On death of the physical self these two would lose their modus operandi, so to speak, and become two, independent entities. Or maybe the high self entity is a being in its own right and attaches itself to a living person through the medium of the fourth dimensional matter, or imaginary mass."

"I see what you mean," Frank said thoughtfully. "That would account for the strange emotional reaction to actually looking into that plane!"

"Yes," Jerry said. "Freud had a theory about a censor that prevented the subconscious from being conscious except in a sort of symbology, and that most of our mental processes owed their origin to factors lurking in the subconscious. Looking into that plane would be something like getting rid of the Freudian censor."

"I think you've hit it!" Frank said excitedly. "That would account for a lot of spirit manifestations on record! It would account for a lot of psychological facts, too!"

"I don't know," Gertrude spoke up. "I think I see a flaw in your reasoning. Also in the idea that Blacky and his gang are the spirits of dead people. Suppose we are triune in structure with one body in the flesh plane and one in each of the planes on either side of it. Then, according to that, we should be visible in the three hyper-planes at once. Right?"

"Not necessarily," Frank said.

"When the three entities are connected they might be drawn so close together that they aren't in the other two hyper-planes entirely, but in an in-between space. When the attractive force that holds the three together is destroyed by death, the two surviving members spring apart by a sort of fourth-dimensional repulsion. A good analogy is three magnets lying on a surface such as a table top. I think I have three magnets that will do the trick."

HE WENT over to a closet door and opened it revealing shelves filled with all sorts of objects and several boxes. He came back with three bar magnets. Testing them to see which were like poles he laid a pair on the table with the north pole of one lying next to the south pole of the other so that they were together with their ends even. Then he laid the third magnet so that it had its north pole alongside the south pole of the center magnet.

"See?" he exclaimed. "The three hold together. What would happen if I yanked out the middle magnet so violently that it amounts to destroying it?"

He separated the magnets and tied a string to the one that had been in the middle. Then he put them together again. Next he gave a sudden jerk that yanked the middle magnet away without dragging either of the other two with it.

Promptly the two outside magnets moved a short distance away from each other because of their mutual repulsion when the binding magnetic force of the center magnet was removed.

"It would work even more perfect if the three magnets were electromagnets with no iron core," Frank said. "Then instead of yanking the middle, binding magnet out by brute

force, all I would have to do is shut off the current in the middle magnet. That would be equivalent to death in the living person."

"Well I'll be darned!" exclaimed Jerry. "We have two spirits then instead of one. I wonder which one of them is me?"

"According to the teachings of the great masters," Frank said gravely, "each man has three entities; the conscious, or physical self, the super-conscious or high self, and the sub-conscious or low self. I doubt very much if they knew about the true nature of the so-called spirit planes; but they called them planes and pictured a lower astral plane on which the animal spirit or low spirit of a man lived after the man's death, and an upper astral plane for the high spirits.

"They had a lot more to add to that. They claimed that there were still other planes, and that after a high spirit developed enough to progress to the higher planes he could come back and contact the earth plane, but did not like to. They also claimed that the low self, by successive-re-incarnations, could develop to the point where it would enter the upper astral.

"If we substitute hyper-plane for spiritual plane, then all these astral planes and the earth plane are merely three-spaces. A magnet, by its very nature, must have a north and a south pole. When a single pole magnet is formed in any three-space the opposite pole must form in some other three-space in order for the single pole in one three-space to exist. When I synthesized element 117 I did that. No doubt there is something about the living human that is a single pole magnet, so that it attracts or creates counterparts in adjacent three-spaces.

"Damn it," Frank concluded his

lengthy speech, "We are on the verge of the most outstanding discovery of all time, and we have to stay holed up and in fear of our very lives just because one of these belts is in the hands of a crazy lunatic in the lower astral!"

He turned angrily and took another look through the viewscope to see if everything was okay.

AFTER A moment of silence Jerry spoke.

"I think I have an idea," he said. "That viewscope can stay in fixed focus between two planes, can't it?"

Frank nodded.

"Well," Jerry said, "Suppose one of us takes it into the upper astral plane, so called, and looks through it into the Earth plane. He will be invisible to both groups of Blacky's watchers. Then the other two of us make some kind of a break for it. One of the watchers will undoubtedly run to the pre-arranged meeting place to tell Blacky, and the one of us that is hidden in the other plane can follow him and surprise Blacky with the belt."

"That's a darned good idea," Frank said, surprised. "But can any of us stand being in the upper astral long enough to do it?"

"Not only that," Gertrude said, "But are we sure there aren't beings on that plane that are like Blacky? Maybe some of them are worse. We don't know."

"Well, we've got to do something," Jerry said. "Whatever we do involves risk. I'd advise that you get rid of all those other belts you have some way. We wouldn't want them to get in the wrong hands. How'll you do it, though?"

A sudden idea made his face light up.

"Wait a minute," he said excitedly. "The only reason Blacky is interested in you is that he wants those other

belts. He's too handicapped with just one. Right?"

"Partly," Frank said. "He is also afraid of us because we are the only ones that could chase him from one plane to another, and if we let the police in on our secret we could organize to capture him."

"That makes it even better," Jerry said. "Now, what would happen if I put on two of these belts and set one to go forward and the other to go backward?"

"Their pull isn't more than a few pounds," Frank said thoughtfully. "I don't know, but I think that you would either stay in one plane, or part of you would bend into one plane and part into another. I really don't know. I hadn't thought of that angle before."

"This thing has got more possibilities than a card game," Jerry said. "Imagine an atom bomb started in another plane and set to explode when it gets in the Earth plane. The enemy could be right inside the bomb area and not get hurt from the explosion. That isn't what I had in mind though. Suppose we fix those belts so that when they are pressed to start them one way they can't be stopped? Then let Blacky's gang steal them? That'll get rid of the gang. Then we can smoke Blacky out into the open!"

"Maybe you've got something there," Frank exclaimed. "I hate to think: what will become of the ones that wear the belts. By the time they figure out some way to stop them they may be in some three space so alien that they can't exist any longer. It will be very simple to do, too. The way those buttons are made, all we have to do is loosen a small screw and they will push in but not spring out again. That way the shield will stay open."

Frank went over to the safe and brought out the rest of the belts.

There were twenty of them besides the three worn by Frank, Gertrude and Jerry.

IT TOOK almost an hour to fix them all. When they were through Frank straightened up and said, "Well, that's done. What's the next step?"

"Now I've got to convince Blacky that we want to join forces with him," Jerry said. "We've got to bargain with him so he won't suspect a trap. Remember, all we want is for all his men to put on these belts and push the button. Then we've got him. After we catch him and take his belt away we can figure out what to do about his men. Maybe we can catch up with them one by one and bring them back and take their belts away from them. First, though, we have to get the only good one besides the ones we are wearing. Catch?"

Frank and Gertrude nodded.

Jerry took out a clean linen handkerchief and tied it onto the end of a ruler he found in the closet. Then he cautiously opened the front door. He remembered they hadn't been shot at when they came. Also Gertrude hadn't been shot at when she went to get him. The gang evidently had orders not to do any shooting, but Jerry wasn't taking any more chances than necessary.

When the front door swung open, Jerry stuck the end of the ruler with the handkerchief out where the thugs could see it. Then slowly he stepped out into full view and walked down the steps to the front lawn.

From there he walked over to the bush behind which he had seen one of them lurking. When he got within ten feet of the bush he said, "We want you to take a message to Blacky. We want to dicker with him about getting together—joining forces."

There was silence for several seconds, then a man stepped out. Jerry looked at him closely. He seemed no different than any other human being. There was something familiar about him.

Then Jerry recognized him.

"Say," he exclaimed, "Aren't you Butch Coletti?"

"Yeah," the fellow said, surprised. "Say! You're Jerry Chane, ain't you? Sure! I remember you now. You shot me that time you tracked us down out on the farm hideout. I guess you killed me, didn't you!"

"Yeah," Jerry said. "No hard feelings?"

"Naw," Butch said. "We've got it pretty nice now. When we get the rest of them belts we'll *really* be sittin' pretty!"

"That's what I want to see Blacky about," Jerry said. "Those two back there in the house didn't know what they could do with these belts things until they saw what Blacky did with them. Now they want to go in with him. They've got the belts and Blacky has the gang to use them. If they join forces they can really go places."

"What about you?" Butch asked suspiciously. "You're on the side of the law, aren't you?"

"What d'ya mean, on the side of the law?" Jerry snarled. "There was a big reward for you guys when I got you that time, I'm out for the money the same as anybody else. Well, with these belts we'll have the world by the tail. Right?"

"Right," Butch said. "Okay, I'll go tell Blacky." He lowered his voice. "Between you and me, Jerry, any time you want to cook up a deal to be top man in this racket, count me in, will you? I can't see you as the kind of a guy to take orders from Blacky for very long."

Jerry grinned knowingly at Butch.

"Okay, Butch," he said. "I'll remember that."

HALF AN HOUR later Jerry and Frank saw Butch return alone. He came walking down the street and up the sidewalk to the front door.

Frank opened the door when Butch was climbing the steps.

"Where's Blacky?" he asked.

"Blacky said he wanted to play it smart," Butch said. "He had a bullet proof sedan parked up the street a ways. The three of you are to come up there away from the house here and bring the belts with you. Then he will make a deal like you want. Them's his words."

Frank hesitated.

"He said you wouldn't be in no danger," Butch said soothingly. "He said you have your belts on and you could switch planes before he could start anything to take them away from you. He just doesn't like the idea of coming here because he doesn't know what else you've got lined up, that's all."

"Let's do it," Jerry said, giving Butch a knowing look. "Butch is right, and if we want to cash in on these belts we have to play ball with a smart organizer like Blacky to get anywhere."

"Yeah. Sure," Butch agreed enthusiastically.

"Okay," Frank gave in with seeming reluctance. He turned back into the room and picked up the stack of belts, then led the way down the steps and up the street.

A sleek black sedan was parked at the curb in the middle of the next block. When the three drew near they could see a man sitting inside.

They stopped beside the sedan and Blacky rolled the window down a bare inch so that he could talk to them. His eyes rested greedily on the belts under Frank's arm for a long

second. Then he said, "Butch tells me you want to make a deal with me. Okay, what is it?"

"Simply this," Jerry spoke up before Frank could reply. "We've got the belts. You've got the men to use them. We both want to do the same things with them and can do them better together than separate and fighting each other. We'll turn over the belts if you agree that we get half the stuff that comes in. You and your gang get the other half to split among you."

"Hah!" Blacky snorted. "Why should I do that when I can starve you all in another week or so? After all, we've got forever. We're immortal now that we're dead."

"That's right," Jerry agreed. "But you forgot one thing. Or maybe you didn't know about it. These belts wear out in time. They run on atomic power. Ever hear of that?"

At Blacky's puzzled nod he went on.

"It takes a lot of atomic power for one of these belts to work, and sooner or later they run down. Frank here knows how to renew them. You don't. You might starve us out. Then we'd be on the same plane as you and maybe we could manage it to hide some belts over there and get them after we died. Then we'd be just like you. Ever think of that? We're just as immortal as you are."

He estimated the effects of his words on Blacky.

"Tie in with us," he said calmly, "and we will keep the belts working. You get half and we take half."

"Give me sixty and you take forty and it's a deal," Blacky said shrewdly.

JERRY glanced questioninglly at Frank and Gertrude. They nodded their consent.

"That's more like it," Blacky said

with a satisfied grunt. "Now we can get somewhere."

Jerry let out a long breath in relief. Then he played his last card.

"Fine," he said. "First though, we don't trust each other. How many men have you got?"

"Nineteen," Blacky replied. "Seven in the bushes behind you, and twelve on the other side somewhere around here."

"All right," Jerry said. "Most of of them are on the other side. Go over and tell them we've made a deal. Then come back and take each of the seven men here over. We'll meet you there and hand over the belts. But when we hand over the belts we want you with us so there won't be any funny business like killing us or taking our belts away from us so we can't follow you wherever you go."

"Suppose we work it this way," Blacky said obligingly. "I take my men over. Then I come back. You take the belts over—"

"Wait a minute," Frank interrupted. "The belts won't carry over that way. You'll have to bring all your men to this plane. Then you go back with us while they put on the belts."

"The belts won't carry over like other stuff?" Blacky asked innocently.

"No," Frank answered. "They won't move out of this plane unless they're set to move individually."

"I see," Blacky said slowly. "Well, I'll go bring the rest of my gang here and then we can go on from there."

With that he vanished. Ten minutes later he came out of the shrubery onto the sidewalk followed by twelve men. The men all had guns and the guns were all pointed at Jerry, Frank, and Gertrude.

"The deals off," Blacky said blandly. "Go ahead and press the buttons on your belts. You can't take the others with you. Go ahead. In about

five seconds we're going to start shooting if you don't. We'll take care of you later. Right now we want those belts."

Jerry turned angrily to Frank.

"You crazy idiot," he said fiercely. "I told you to let me do the talking. See what you got us into?"

"But don't they know that they need us to renew the belts?" Frank asked in seeming bewilderment, taking Jerry's cue.

"Ha!" Blacky snorted. "Think I fell for that gag? I know that atomic power never wears out. Anybody knows that that ever read the newspapers."

JERRY PUT a finger on the button on his belt and nodded to Frank and Gertrude. They followed suit, and the three of them faded from view to appear together far enough out of ordinary three-space to be safe from the bullets from the guns pointed at them.

They could still see what went on, and to those left behind they appeared as wraiths.

The stack of belts Frank had been carrying dropped to the sidewalk. There was a mad scramble as the gang pounced on them.

When each man had a belt fastened around his waist there was one left lying on the sidewalk.

"An extra one," Blacky exclaimed. "There might be something to what that guy said after all. I'm not taking any chances. I'll just take this one myself and hide my old one for an emergency."

He took off his belt and put on the one left. Then he put his old one in the glove compartment of his car and locked it.

"Okay," he said, turning to his gang. "Let's see how it feels to all jump out of this world at once. From now on we can really go to town."

Daylight bank robberies. Bandits vanish into thin air!"

He laughed loudly and jabbed his finger to the button that would carry him "out of this world."

One after another his gang followed him. When they were gone Frank, Gertrude, and Jerry materialized and looked at one another very pleased.

"That was more luck than we counted on," Jerry said.

"Aren't you going to rescue them?" Gertrude asked.

Jerry shrugged his shoulders.

"Why should we?" he asked in a flat voice. "If we brought them back they would always be a source of trouble. The way things are now there is no one who knows about the belts that might use them to make trouble."

He turned to the car and began working on the door lock.

"Jerry's right," Frank said. "I don't know what will happen to those men, but after all, they are already dead and I doubt if going forever through the fourth dimension will hurt them much. Eventually they'll all get the idea of taking off the belts and throwing them away. Then they'll be stuck where they are and learn to adjust themselves to whatever kind of a world they are in."

"That's the way I figure it myself," Jerry said, his eyes and fingers intent on the process of stuffing string into the key slot of the door lock. "We have one of the greatest discoveries of all history in these belts and the principle of their operation. It belongs to Frank, of course."

He straightened up and faced Frank and Gertrude. Then he went on.

"If you will count me in on it I would like to work with you," he continued. "There are things open to us now that are beyond our present ability to even imagine. For example, space travel. We could build a ship and move it far enough in the fourth

dimension to get away from gravity, like Gertrude did when we escaped from my office downtown."

A startled look appeared on Frank's face.

"I never thought of that," he ex-

claimed. "I guess you're in. I've been missing half the possibilities of this thing all the time. And anyway," he paused and looked slyly at his sister, "I think we both need you around to keep us out of trouble."

RAIN BY MAGIC



By Peter Robert



SOMETIMES in the more remote parts of the world when a drought has lasted for a long, long time, people get desperate after many appeals to their gods to send rain. They become too angry to waste their breath in prayer, and use threats and curses and even violence to procure water from the sky. In certain Japanese towns, when their god had been long deaf to their pleas for rain, they threw his image head first into a scorched rice field, threatening to leave him there till he should feel the same as their crops, burned by the sun for many weeks.

The Chinese make a huge dragon of paper to represent their rain-god, and carry it about in a procession. If rain was not forthcoming, they threatened and beat the god and tore him to pieces. In 1888, the mandarins of Canton prayed to the god Lung-wong to stop the incessant downpour. When the rain failed to cease, they locked him up in the jail for five days. This was the proper punishment apparently, for the weather cleared and the god was restored to liberty. The Siamese set their gods out in the scorching sun when they want rain, and remove the roofs from their houses and let the rain drench their idols when they wish for dry weather. They feel that by putting an inconvenience on their gods, they will induce them to grant their wishes.

We may laugh at these foolish ways of obtaining the desired weather, but in our own day similar methods have been used in Christian Europe. In 1893, Sicily was in bad shape because of a drought which had lasted for six months. The crops were

ruined and food was scarce. Famine was in sight. The people were distraught for all the approved methods of rain-making had been tried. Men, women, and children had lain night and day before their holy images telling their beads. Consecrated candles were burned incessantly in the churches. Blessed palm branches were hung in the trees and the dust swept from the churches on Palm Sunday had been spread over the fields. The inhabitants carried their crucifixes through the towns praying every step of the way. Even the image of the great St. Francis, who annually performed the miracle of the rain, could not or refused to help his distressed people. Masses, vespers, concerts, etc. would not influence him. At last the peasants lost patience and banished most of their saints. At Palermo, St. Joseph was thrown into a garden to see for himself how the ground was scorched. They swore to leave him there till rain fell. Other saints were turned with their faces to the wall. Their beautiful robes were removed and some were exiled far from their parishes and were made to suffer such indignities as being ducked in horse ponds. At Caltanissetta, the golden wings of St. Michael were torn from his body and replaced by wings made of paper. His purple mantle was taken away and he was wrapped with a rag instead. Some saints faced much worse being stripped of all their garments, dragged through the streets, thrown in irons and threatened with hanging. After a few weeks of such treatment, the rains came and the saints were forgiven and restored to their rightful positions.

THE END

SPEED DEMONS

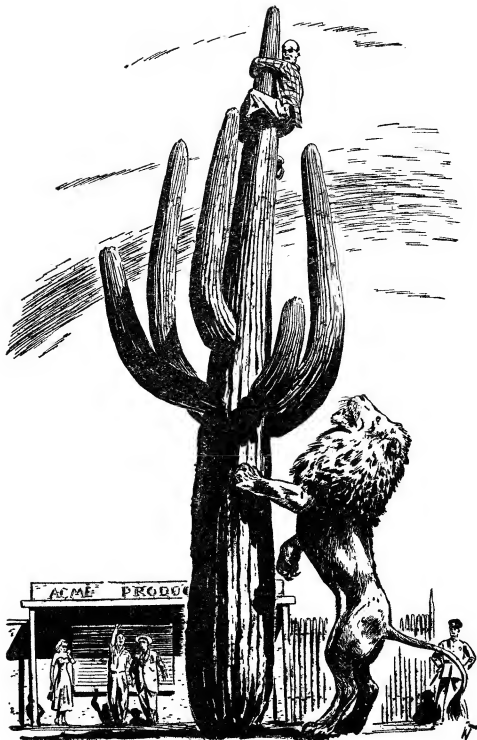


By Pete Bogg



WITH THE help of our new jet planes, man is by far the fastest creature on earth, or perhaps we should say off the earth. Man can go close to seven hundred miles an hour in a jet plane. But the frigate bird, without the use of engines, can go over two hundred and sixty miles per hour, and the swift has been timed

flying two hundred miles an hour. The falcon can reach that speed in a dive. Incredible as it may seem, the dragonfly can give any "hot rod" a good race, for it can fly eighty or ninety miles an hour. The hunting leopard and various types of Asiatic antelope are able to travel close to eighty miles an hour.



"Shoot the lion!" Schwartzkopf screamed. "These thorns are killing me!"

The ELIXIR of PEACE

By Robert Moore Williams

**The serum made a lamb out of a lion, but it also
made a lion out of a film director!**

I WAS SITTING at my desk worrying when Sam Jones came bursting into the hut that we used for an office. Sam was my partner and if you excepted some queer ideas he had—such as the belief that he was actually a second Tarzan, only nobody had thought of casting him for that part, and that he was a third or fourth Tom Edison, only his inventions didn't seem to come off somehow—if you accepted these oddities, he was as fine a fellow as ever lived in the wonderfully wacky land of Southern California.

"Bill, I've got it!" He stopped in the door and waved a bottle of pink liquid at me. Looking at it and at the entranced expression on his face, I knew some more accepting and excepting were in order.

"Go away," I said. "I've got troubles, you've got troubles, we've got troubles. I have here on my desk a bill for \$380.21—for horse meat. According to the stub of our check-book, we have a net bank balance of \$102.40. If I write a check for \$380.21, I am likely to get put in jail. If I don't write this check the company collector who is due to call here for it at any minute is going to say, 'No more horse meat for you, Bub.' And when he says that—" I looked Sam straight in the eye. "—what are three lions, four hyenas, one snow leopard, two wolves—if Nettie hasn't whelped yet, in which case there are more—going to do for

eating meat? And that doesn't include what is going to happen to the animals that eat hay, the ones that like carrots, the apple eaters, the stale bread eaters, the fish eaters—" I stopped. Sam hadn't heard a word.

"I've been working on this for months, Bill, on the quiet. You know the problem as well as I do. Schwartzkopf himself told us about it the last time he was here. And that's where I got my idea, Bill, only don't tell Schwartzkopf or he'll grab the credit—"

I leaned back in my chair. When the urge to explain was on Sam, there was only one thing to do—listen. So I let him tell me what I already knew, that one of the big problems of movie directors in making jungle pictures is to get good close-ups of scenes involving both human and animal actors, Tarzan wrestling with the Golden Lion, for instance. No actor, not even a stunt man, likes to work too close to an unreliable lion. Since we earned our living supplying animals to the movies, it was very much to our interest to be able to supply animals tame enough to work safely in front of the camera.

Sam set the bottle of pink liquid on the desk in front of me. "I've solved that problem, Bill. I've discovered an elixir that will make any animal tame, safe, friendly."

For an instant, I was excited. Then the excitement died. I decided I was

not in any humor this morning to encourage young inventors. "Nuts," I said.

Sam looked hurt.

"No elixir on earth could make old Judas safe to work with," I went on. Old Judas was our biggest, oldest, most impressive-looking lion. He was a very reliable beast. You could always rely on him to be ready, willing, and able—to chew a couple of legs off anybody careless enough to get close to him.

"But—" Sam protested.

"Go away," I repeated. "And don't let me catch you giving any of your elixir to our animals. We got enough trouble without adding vet bills—"

Right there I stopped. Sam had been standing in front of the door and I hadn't seen what was following him. I smelled it first—you can always smell lion—and I got quickly to my feet and looked behind Sam, to be sure of what I smelled. It was there. Right behind him. Old Judas—

THE TWO windows were screened and barred and the meanest lion that ever drew breath was standing in the door. Like a bird flying, I went up on top of the filing cabinet and reached for the rifle we kept on the wall to use in case a lion escaped. "Look out!" I yelled at Sam. "He's right behind you."

Sam looked around and grinned. He wasn't surprised at all. He scratched Judas behind the ears. The lion purred like an over-sized but very happy tom-cat.

"Uh?" I said.

"I've been trying to explain," Sam said. "I've already used the elixir on Judas. It works."

"Uh—you— How did you get him to take it?"

"Roped and tied him in his cage,"

Sam explained. "Poured it down his throat. What's wrong with you, Bill? You look all white—"

"Get him out of here. Please."

Sam tickled Judas under the chin. "He's as harmless as a cat, Bill."

Well, that was as it was. I have to have time to grasp ideas like this. I decided to grasp this one from the top of the filing cabinet. I was squatting there grasping when out of the corner of my eyes I saw a long snaky convertible tool slowly past the window. The car stopped in front of the hut and a multi-toned horn blared.

Sam, thinking it was the bill collector, hastily closed the front door.

But no bill collector ever drove a car like that. "Schwartzkopf!" I whispered. We looked at each other. When the director came to see us on the quiet, without having a dozen secretaries call up to announce his coming, it meant that some producer had decided to do a picture, that Schwartzkopf was to direct that picture, and that the script called for wild animals. It also meant the whole picture idea was being kept a secret until the shooting started, so some other company couldn't come out with a similar story. Finally it meant money—for us.

Not that we were mad about money. We just liked to have some of it around.

The horn blared again. A car door slammed.

"Quick. Get Judas in the closet!" I hissed.

"Why?" Sam protested. "This is the chance we've been waiting for. We'll let Schwartzkopf come in and see Judas. That way we'll be able to prove we've got tame animals."

"If he comes through that door and runs head-on into Judas, who will catch him and tell him Judas is

tame?" I pointed out. "You got to give people time to get used to ideas like that. Also, he's got a reputation as a big-game hunter, which is one reason he gets to direct these jungle stews. If we ruin his reputation—"

Sam got the idea fast enough. Opening the closet door, he said. "Get in there, Judas. Get in there, old boy."

Judas looked at the closet. He looked at Sam. He seemed to get the idea but he didn't seem to care for it.

"Get in there, you big over-grown rat catcher!" Sam told him.

Judas, showing a set of six-inch fangs, yawned at him.

Outside the car door slammed again.

"Please, Judas, get in that closet," Sam begged. "See, it's a nice big closet. You can lie down and take a long nap."

Judas sniffed but did not move.

"Hey!" a voice said outside. "Is here anybody around this dump?"

SCHWARTZKOPF sounded irritated. Since he had lowered himself to visit us, he felt that the least we could have done in appreciation would have been to run out a red carpet for him. I would have run out two red carpets except that my feet seemed glued to the top of the filing cabinet.

"Quick!"

Sam, desperate for action, ran around behind Judas and kicked him in the tail end. The shock almost knocked me off the filing cabinet. No matter what kind of elixir Judas had been drinking, I wouldn't have dared to kick him in the bottom, or anywhere else.

The kick did the job. Judas tucked his tail between his legs and hopped into the closet. He closed the

door just as the front door opened.

The director was a short, heavy set man. I had always guessed him as measuring sixty inches around the waist—and sixty miles around the ego.

"Humh!" he said. "What are you doing up on top of that filing cabinet?"

Leaning on his arm was Teddy le Page. Maybe you've seen the curvacious Teddy. Every time a theater shows one of her pictures they have to install an asbestos screen. In addition to being the same for a lot of men, she was Sam's dream girl.

Ordinarily you'd think that nobody who worked as close to the back lots of the movie industry as we did would make an idiot out of himself over a hunk of cheesecake no matter how nice the cheese was, but this wasn't true of Sam Jones. He went to every pic Teddy le Page made, he wrote her fan letters, and he even had his room plastered with stills of her.

When she came into the office Sam looked like somebody was tickling him behind the ears. He hadn't met her. While I got chairs, Schwartzkopf introduced them.

"What can we do for you, Mr. Schwartzkopf?" I asked.

He looked me over. He looked the office over. "I am making a new picture," he announced. The way he said it, it sounded as if it was supposed to be as startling as Vishinsky announcing for peace and good will the birth of a new age.

I beamed.

"It will be," he continued. "An epic."

"All of your pictures have epic proportions," I said.

"Ah. Yes. Well. However, this will be an epic of Africa, based in large measure upon my own adventures

hunting game on the Dark Continent."

"And very thrilling, no doubt," I said.

In the closet, Judas sneezed.

Schwartzkopf rose six inches out of his chair. "What was that?"

"My partner has hay fever," I said. Seeing that Sam was sitting there in plain view, it was a weak explanation but Schwartzkopf let it go. He gave my enthralled ears a detailed explanation of the picture. Teddy was to have the female lead. She was to supply that new look to the native kraals.

By the time Schwartzkopf had finished, I could almost taste the money we were going to make. I glanced fondly at Sam, to show him I thought he was a grand guy and I was glad he was my partner—if his elixir worked—but he was too busy staring at Teddy to notice me.

"You understand our requirements," Schwartzkopf continued. "First, secrecy until the studio makes the announcement. Second, animals tame enough to work with. Personally I feel that the danger from wild animals has been greatly exaggerated but you know what women actors are ..."

"Mr. Schwartzkopf," I said. "This is a lucky day for both of us. You couldn't have come at a better time."

Maybe it was wishful thinking but in my black heart at that moment I really believed that Sam's elixir would do what he claimed.

"My partner has just made a remarkable ..."

OUTSIDE I heard the collector's car pull up. In the closet, Judas coughed.

The cough of a lion is like no other sound on earth. It isn't a cough really, it's a short roar that explodes

out of the beast's throat.

When Judas coughed in the closet, it sounded as if an earthquake had picked up the hut in its teeth and was shaking it apart timber by splintering timber.

"What was that?" Schwartzkopf yelled. "And don't tell me your partner has hay fever—"

"N—nothing. We have a lion cage at the back of the building. One of the lions coughed—"

I might have gotten away with it if Judas hadn't decided he was tired of that closet. I heard him rear up against the door. Claws rattled on wood as he scratched. Then the door gave way and swung open and Judas literally fell into the room.

For one mad instant the very air seemed full of falling lions.

The next instant, so fast did Schwartzkopf move, the air seemed full of directors—going out the door. The bill collector and Schwartzkopf met head on in the doorway. I wasn't sure, of course, but it looked to me as if Schwartzkopf ran up one side of the man, across his head, and down the other side.

"What the hell..."

"Lions!" Schwartzkopf shouted.

"I know they have lions here, you fool. These boys raise 'em. Ugh!"

Judas had trotted to the doorway. He looked out. Then he went out. I heard the sound of running feet.

Teddy le Page quietly fainted and slid to the floor. Sam bent over her. "This is awful, Bill. What'll we do?"

"Go commit suicide. You and your elixir to make tame animals out of wild ones—"

Screams came from outside. "That lion you tamed is out there eating two men alive!" I said. I grabbed the rifle and headed for the door.

In front of our office, as a decorative touch, we had planted two giant

cacti. Schwartzkopf had climbed one of them. The bill collector had climbed the other.

A man unexpectedly meeting a lion thinks only one thought—to climb a tree. Since there weren't any trees, they had climbed the only available objects. Treed on a thorny cactus! No wonder they were screaming.

Judas, sitting on the ground, was looking wonderingly up at them as if he didn't understand why they didn't come down and scratch his ears.

"Shoot that lion!" Schwartzkopf shouted as soon as he saw me with the gun.

"Shoot him quick!" the bill collector begged. "These thorns are killing me."

"Um," I said. I thought fast. "Mr. Schwartzkopf, you are not—er—going to let this unfortunate accident interfere with the agreement we were concluding, are you?"

"What?" he shouted, stunned. "This is blackmail. You can't make me sign an agreement under these circumstances. If you attempt it, I'll sue your shirt off."

"Go ahead and sue. All you will get will be a bunch of lions."

That sobered him. "All right," he said huskily. "I know when I'm whipped. Shoot that lion and I'll sign the order."

"You sign the order first and then I'll dispose of the lion. I'll tie the agreement and a fountain pen on the end of a pole and hand them up to you—"

JUDAS WALKED around the cactus. Schwartzkopf looked at him and then at me. His face indicated he was thinking I was a nasty man but he didn't say what he thought. He nodded. Weakly.

"Sam! Bring out an order blank

and a fountain pen and a fishing pole."

"Just a minute," Sam answered. He sounded excited. "I'll be right out." He came out. He didn't have the order, he didn't have the fountain pen. He had Teddy. She was leaning heavily on his arm. "You saved me from that terrible, terrible lion," she was saying.

"You're sure a fast worker," I said, bitter because he was dawdling at a time of crisis. "Now get me that order."

Sam saw Schwartzkopf. "Golly!" he gasped. "What will the gossip columnists make of this! The famous director treed by a tame lion!"

"What?" Schwartzkopf shouted. "Is that lion tame?"

"No, sir," I said hastily. "He's the meanest brute we own. He killed eight natives in Africa before he was captured."

Judas had been born right here on our ranch but his disposition before Sam worked on him had been so bad that he would have been a man-killer if he had been loose in Africa.

"Bill," Sam protested. "There's no use to lie like that. This is the chance we've been waiting for."

"Shut up. I've got everything fixed."

He was beyond my control. "This lion is completely tame, Mr. Schwartzkopf," he said. "I've been wanting to tell you about it but I haven't had the chance."

He walked over to Judas and scratched the beast behind the ears. Judas licked his hand.

Schwartzkopf's face got red. Then it got white. He jumped down from the cactus. With his fist, he hit Sam in the nose.

One thing about Sam, he was a sunny guy, but nobody ever pushed him around like this. Of course, if

he had stopped to think, he wouldn't have hit anybody so important to us as Schwartzkopf, but if he had ever stopped to think, he wouldn't have been Sam Jones. He hit Schwartzkopf a single punch right on the button. I never saw a big man fall any faster. The director sprawled on the ground, out cold, Judas went over and licked his face.

"Well," I said. "This was a nice racket, while it lasted."

Sam grinned at me. "Hold the deal, Bill. We've just begun to fight."

"You can also just begin to pay," another voice said. It was the collector. He had climbed down from his cactus. "And no checks," he said.

"Stand to one side, Bill," Sam said.

From the look on his face, I guessed what he intended to do. "No!"

The left was already moving, a jab that packed so much dynamite that Sam had for a time thought of taking up fighting for a living. The collector turned a somersault before he hit the ground, out.

I sat down, slowly and heavily, on the gravel drive. Judas came over and licked my face.

"Sam," I said, "you've actually found a way to tame animals. And right now we're in a spot where taming all the lions in Africa wouldn't be worth a buck to us."

"Take Judas back to his cage, Bill, like a good egg," Sam said. "And hold the deal."

I TOTTERED off with Judas following me like a stray kitten looking for a happy home. I put him in his cage and sat down and smoked a cigarette. Then a thought popped into my mind: Sam was going to murder Schwartzkopf and the collector and hide their bodies. This was the only solution to our problem

I could see. I headed back to the office at a dead run.

The bill collector was coming out the front door. "Nice morning," he said, waving at me.

"Huh!"

"About your bill," he continued. "I've talked it over with your partner and I'm going to give you all the time you want. Just forget all about it."

Smiling fondly at me; he got in his car and drove away.

Then Schwartzkopf came out. He was talking to himself. "An epic," he was saying. "A super colossal stupendous epic."

He came over and slapped me on the back. "A great man, that partner of yours. You ought to be proud of him."

"Uh?"

He slapped me on the back again and got in his car and drove away. The sixteen cylinder exhaust seemed to mutter, "Super colossal epic."

I tottered into the office. Sam was there. Teddy was there. Though I live a thousand years, I never expect to see another woman kissed the way she was being kissed.

I walked gently around them and sat down at my desk. Sam saw me and left off mugging long enough to shove a piece of paper at me. The word AGREEMENT was splashed across the top of the page. Schwartzkopf's signature was scrawled at the bottom.

I started to read it. Then I started to scream. It wasn't an order for animals. It was a contract to act in the movies.

"I must have given you the wrong contract, Bill," Sam said hastily. "That's my agreement to play the male lead in Schwartzkopf's jungle picture." He fumbled another sheet of paper out of his pocket. "Here's

our contract to supply the animals for it."

I looked at him. He was a wonderful man. "Would you mind," I said, "explaining—"

He leaned over and whispered in my ear. "I gave 'em a shot of the elixir."

"To a human being!"

"Well, I guess Schwartzkopf is human. When Teddy fainted and you went rushing out to see about Judas, I looked around for some water to give her. There wasn't any water but the bottle of elixir was sitting on your desk. So I gave her some of it."

"And Schwartzkopf drank that?"

"Oh, he was unconscious too, when he drank it. I thought if it would tame Judas, it ought to do something

at least for a movie director—"

I stared at him.

"You wonderful man," Teddy whispered. "Come and kiss me again."

"See what it did to her," he said.

"Kiss me," she repeated.

He was obeying orders as they went out the door.

I sat there at my desk. The half-empty bottle of elixir was sitting in front of my eyes. I looked at it. And looked again. "You need a drink, Bill," I told myself. "Bad."

I don't know what was in that bottle but it certainly gave you a wonderful glow. After two drinks, I went out to the lion's cage and kissed Judas.

THE END

THREE MYTHS

By Lester Fletcher



IT IS SURPRISING how closely related the whole world of mythology is. The ancient Norse Gods, the Greeks' Gods and certain of the Asiatic Gods have amazingly similar backgrounds. Naturally there are distinctions—quite clear too—but on the whole, the stuff from which men have fashioned the legends of their origins is a common clay.

In particular do we find this to be true when dealing with the ideas underlying the creation of the Earth, and the sidelines which are its offshoots. Thus the gigantic Ash tree of the Norse, Yggdrasil, is closely related in basic idea if not in form to the Egyptian turtle. Both support the Earth. Both act as the primal source of earthly stability.

Yggdrasil has enormous roots which are carefully tended by the three goddesses, the Norns, who are also called the dispensers of Fate. They are Urd, the past, Verdandi, the present and Skuld, the future. On the whole, the Grecian legends are far more beautifully laced with charm and enchantment than the bloody Northern Sagas. This seems to be understandable. The Greeks lived in a relatively pleasant sunny

climate where it was easy to be optimistic. The Norse on the other inhabited a clime where the struggle for existence was a bitter thing. Is it any wonder that his legends reflect his lot?

The Asiatics' legends are threaded through with resignation, with patience and with stoicism. We cannot exactly determine why this is so; there is less optimism—yet not pessimism. Calm acceptance of the fate the gods intend to deal one, are still a characteristic of the Asiatic, though contact with the western world has considerably changed that.

It would be interesting to speculate on what would happen if another dark age should arise when man would have to emerge from the primeval once more. Would he create legends similar to the ones he did in the past? Or would an entirely different set of ideas derive from his fertile, facile mind? Such questions cannot be answered though we can get a slight clue from the behavior of certain primitive Polynesian and African tribes whose origin, mythically speaking is comparatively recent. It seems the same patterns are followed.

THE ANCIENT GEOMETRICAL MONUMENT

Article 6 —Its Integral

By ROCKY STONE

(Note: This is the sixth of the TAG-M Series of Articles leading up to the disclosure of the fundamental principle of man which has been sought for from ancient times and which has always been keyed in the Great Pyramid, the displacement cornerstone of TAG-M—the hyper-cube.)

THE GREAT Pyramid has been regarded for many years by certain persons as being just a tomb, while others have speculated and theorized about its real purpose—but with the disclosure of the fundamental principle of man which is epitomized in this ancient time-capsule, there will be actual facts instead of speculative theories to consider, and *the future of man* has a greater opportunity to become more secure when the wisdom of the M-giants is understood and employed in the right way by all intelligent persons who are living on earth today and who desire actually to investigate such real and very valuable knowledge.

The M-giants, those wise mental giants of long ago, were apparently aware of the great fact that when the fundamental principle of man would be understood by world people it would appear that our generation would actually begin to realize that there is a "*new space*" which cannot be seen or cognized unaided thru the five physical senses of man—which "*new space*" has greater potentialities than had the Western Hemisphere that first became known to Europe-

ans during the 15th and the 16th centuries. The M-giants apparently realized that our generation would finally become acutely aware of the great fact that the human race is even now but in the "Kindergarten Stage", while the achievements of man up to date have barely scratched the surface of the great depths of life.

In the fourth and the fifth Articles you have been informed that the reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States, which contains a pyramid symbol, can confirm the attitude and the opinion of the real founders of the U.S. Government who were naturally sure that *the future of the physical events of nature* would substantiate their choice of the type of government for the U.S.A. which guarantees the natural rights of man to each and every U.S. citizen.

The moving picture industry has a wonderful opportunity to cooperate in the rebirth and growth of a nation, while the American press can enlighten American citizens as to the powers of the Administration of the U. S. Government under the U.S. Constitution.

There will come a time when radio and television programs will allow every person, who so desires, to gain a better understanding of what man actually is and of the great necessity of having a government of real principles which are always practiced, instead of a centralized government of men who might have theoretical fancies of a totalitarian State which might not only retard the progress of the human race, but which might also cause human society to retrogress and to retreat to the dark ages of ignorance.

It has been almost a catastrophe that the outer white limestone casing of the Great Pyramid was stripped to furnish material for dwellings and mosques or to be burnt for lime, since this ancient time-capsule—in its complete original form—could now have been of much greater interest to anthropologists, archaeologists, and others. Drifted sand and debris at the base of the Great Pyramid saved a few of the white limestone outer-casing blocks by covering them, thus keeping these few blocks in their original positions safe from marauders.

The greatest skeptic and the most realistic type of person are forced to appreciate the actual and the practical wisdom of the M-giants in their foresight of keying the fundamental principle of man in a wonderful monument which was so large and of such magnitude that it would have been too expensive to have completely demolished it during the centuries since its construction.

Al Mamoun, according to reports the Caliph of Bagdad, organized an expedition in the early part of the 9th century for the purpose of mak-

ing a forced entry into the North side of the Great Pyramid where legend said the entrance could be found. As was pointed out by McCarty in "The Great Pyramid Jeezeh", "Caliph Al Mamoun directed his Mohammedan workmen to begin at the *middle* of the North side; 'precisely', says Sir Gardiner Wilkinson, 'as the founders of the Great Pyramid had foreseen, when they placed the entrance, not in the middle of the North side, but 24 feet and some inches away to the East, as well as many feet above the ground level.'" (The original entrance to the Great Pyramid was to the East of the middle of the North side to also symbolize the great scientific fact that the mental picture of a happening in the *present objective instant of the physical events of nature* is not cognized in the *present subjective instant* (in the mind) of man for a fraction of an instant afterwards, or as in the case of light from far distant stars which arrives long afterwards.)

Altho Caliph Al Mamoun and his workmen were unable to find any gold, jewels, or other treasure which would compensate them for their weeks of unrelenting work in making a forced entry of approximately 100 feet into the North side of the Great Pyramid, they at least accomplished, in breaking thru to the place where the ascending passageway to the upper light chambers meets the descending passageway from the original entrance, the discovery of what has been called the "Granite Plug" in the lowest end of the ascending passageway. During this operation important symbolical stones in the ascending passageway above the "Granite Plug" were destroyed and removed without the value of these stones being realized.

Others in the past have pointed out that the internal arrangement of the ancient time-capsule, which type of arrangement is unknown in any and every other Pyramid in Egypt, became known to the Mohammedans many centuries after the engineers of the Great Pyramid's construction had seated up the monument to fulfill its prophetic destination at the end of many centuries—which appears to be the time of our generation in the twentieth century.

"The Granite Plug" is made up of three large dark granite blocks of stone which completely plug up the end of the ascending passageway, and these three blocks of stone apparently symbolize *the past, the present subjective instant, and the future of man*. Without an understanding of the full meaning and the relations which these three blocks of granite represent, man ends in what is symbolized by the Subterranean Chamber, the "Pit of Destruction", instead of ascending to the upper chambers.

The *prismatic* stone of concealment or the *prism*-shaped block that had been anciently inserted in the ceiling of the descending passageway was the one which dropped to the floor of the descending passageway when, it has been reported, Al Mammoun's workmen had almost given up trying to force an entry—but hearing the noise of this stone dropping, they were encouraged to keep on and were finally successful in encountering the juncture of the ascending and the descending passageways.

The low end of the "Granite Plug" is square, but the *prismatic* stone which concealed it at the 'entrance' to the ascending passageway, was triangular. An important fact not to be passed by is that there is very

hard material in the floor of the descending passageway which is *opposite* to the *prismatic* stone's place in the ceiling. Piazzzi Smyth has said that the material in just this section of the floor is of such hardness and durability that it was evidently intended to last to the end of human time with the Great Pyramid, and has done so thus far, while there was actually a secret sign in this floor pavement which was appreciable only to a careful eye and a measurement of angle.

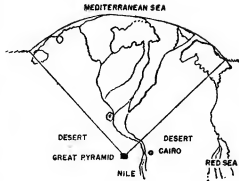
Many facts and a number of theories have been written about the Great Pyramid, and some of these are very informative. Several years ago an American discovered that the shoreline around the delta of the Nile describes an arc of a circle whose center is at the point where the Great Pyramid is standing at Gizeh, near Cairo. Figure 2 shows this arc to be apparently 90 degrees, which brings to mind the 90 degree angle *in infinity* of each of the six truncated pyramids of TAG-M. The North side of the Great Pyramid has symbolized on it *the present objective instant of the physical events of nature*, and can it be possible that when the ancient time-capsule was planned the delta of the Nile was even then a 90 degree arc of a circle and that the rocky plateau at Gizeh, where the Great Pyramid was to be constructed, was the center?

Seiss states in "A Miracle in Stone" that the summit corner of the Great Pyramid lifts its solemn index-finger to the sun at midday and that the mean distance of the sun from the earth is symbolized by the measurement from the base to the summit. Sir Flinders Petrie worked the problem out as follows: "One-half

the length of a base-diagonal of the Great Pyramid is to the altitude of the Great Pyramid as 10 is to 9. Hence, the altitude (5813.01) X 10 raised to its 9th power, is 5813.01 X 1,000,000,000 which equals 5,813,010,000,000 Pyramid inches,—which equals 5,818,823,000,000 British inches or 484,901,917,500 British feet, and this amount of British feet equals 91,837,484 British miles, the distance from the earth to the sun."

Seiss in "A Miracle in Stone" also discloses that just as the earth, your planet, goes around the sun, so the entire solar system as a unit goes around Alcyon of the Pleiades as a center—one complete revolution being made every 25,827.5 years, which is known to astronomers as the "calendar" for the Precession of the Equinoxes. Worth Smith in "Miracle of the Ages" also points out that it has been found that the sum of the two base diagonals of the Great Pyramid ($2 \times 12,913.75$) equals 25,827.5 Pyramid inches, which gives the number of years in the Precession of the Equinoxes, at the rate of a pyramid inch per year. The "deeper center" around which both the solar system and the Pleiades revolve is not yet definitely known by today's astronomers.

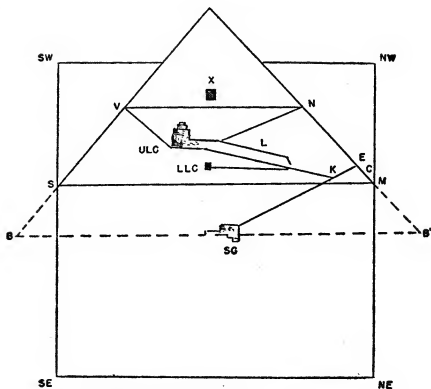
Joseph A. Seiss, the author of "A Miracle in Stone or The Great Pyramid of Egypt", theorized that there was a third chamber in the ancient time-capsule. Figure AA shows where, in the opinion of Seiss, this CHAMBER might be. (In the fourth Article of the TAG-M Series, *the cube of infinity*—also known as the CHAMBER OF THE ENLIGHTENED and the CHAMBER OF THE GRAND ORIENT—was shown to be 100 feet (approximately)



Delta of the Nile.
90° arc of circle with
Great Pyramid at center.

less in height than the summit or top of the Great Pyramid which wholly displaces the truncated pyramid which represents *the past of man* in the Ancient Geometrical Monument and partially displaces the other five truncated pyramids of TAG-M, which represent *the present subjective instant and the future of man*, as well as *the past, the present objective instant, and the future of the physical events of nature*. Figure AA from now on will be used instead of Figure K from former Articles.

On November 6, 1910 the following was reported in the Chicago Sunday Tribune, "When Khufu built the Great Pyramid about 5,700 years ago the old emperor doubtless chuckled to himself and said in Egyptian, 'Well I guess that will hold posterity stumped for a while', and it is to be hoped that he is in a position to get all possible satisfaction out of the awe and wonder his work has inspired in 200 generations. It seems



Cross section of Great Pyramid from east.
 SW, NW, SE, NE — Societies at Great Pyramid.
 VN — Violet wavelengths.
 SM — Visible base and red wavelength.
 BB' — First invisible base of Great Pyramid.
 ULC — Upper light chamber.
 LLC — Lower light chamber.
 SC — Subterranean chamber.
 X — Third upper chamber, theorized by Dr. Jos. Seiss.
 E — Entrance
 C — Al Momoun's forced entry.
 L — Grand Gallery.
 K — Granite Plug.

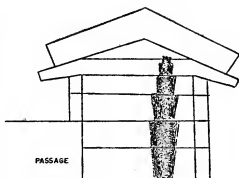
that we shall never exhaust even the mystery of it until some giant quake shakes it to pieces so that we shall have a better excuse for prying the great stones about the peering into the secrets that have remained holy from such a dim and dusty past. An American Egyptologist, Dow Covington, has just cleared away the sand and debris from a 100 feet of the base exposing the original facing stones (the outer white limestone casing) and the wonderful old pavement laid on the bedrock which once formed a broad promenade the whole

way around the structure. At one time the whole exterior of the pyramid presented a perfectly smooth surface; now all of it that stands above the rubbish and sand looks like a flight of mighty steps, the triangular stones (of the outer white limestone casing) having been taken at some remote period and burned for lime most likely. Fortunately the stones under the debris were spared so that we know the pyramid was not covered with marble, alabaster, or any other wonderfully precious stone, but was decked out in

simple limestone, but so accurately chiseled, so wonderfully fitted and cemented that the seams were no wider than pin scratches and the whole pile stood out against the yellow desert, a great white monolith enormously impressive in its chaste simplicity.

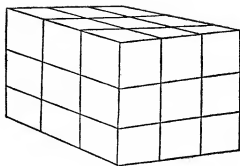
"In every age, envious vandal princes have attempted to rob the monument of old Khufu of its secrets, its beauty, or its wealth, but these five thousand years of abuse have not been able to undo the work of one man's lifetime. The Egyptians of all ages attempted to penetrate the sepulchral recesses of the monument; the Romans left signs of their occupation in the Roman glassware that is found in some of the niches and the Moslems under the Caliph Al Mamoun found the great tomb of the great emperor open and empty. Yet Mr. Covington believes that there are still rooms that have not been discovered, and large ones at that. The diorite chips among the workman's rubbish leads archaeologists to believe that there is a diorite room somewhere in the dark heart of the problematical old pile."

We now know that the Great Pyramid contains the tomb, the great tomb, of the *past of man*, and that the "Granite Coffin" in the King's Chamber is symbolical of the *past of man* vertically, while horizontally it is symbolical of the *present subjective instant of man* in what is the "new space". The "Granite Coffin" has been called the "stone box", the "granite chest", the "lidless vessel", the "porphyry vase", the "black marble sarcophagus", etc., by various investigators during the last few centuries.



Queen's (lower light) chamber. There are six courses of masonry on the four walls.

There are 100 stones in the five courses of masonry of the four walls of the "King's Chamber", while there are nine large slabs of granite,—each supposed to weigh about 42 tons—in the ceiling and eighteen stones were reported to have composed the floor of the "King's Chamber",—the number of stones or stone in the ceiling being to those in the floor, as 1:2. Past investigators, according to Worth Smith, have pointed out that the capacity of the "Queen's Chamber", 10 million cubic pyramid inches, is to the capacity of the "King's Chamber", 20 million cubic of the cube itself, while in all there are pyramid inches as 1:2, while the cubic capacity of the inside dimensions of the "Granite Coffin" is to the cubic capacity of the outside dimensions, as 1:2. It has already been pointed out that the "five chambers of construction" above the "King's Chamber" are symbolical of the five truncated pyramids of TAG-M which are partially displaced by the Great Pyramid, and the five courses of masonry on the walls of the "King's Chamber" are likewise symbolical of



Three-inch white limestone cube
containing 27 one-inch cubes.

these five partially displaced pyramids.

There is an indirect analogy concerning the nine large slabs of granite in the ceiling of the "King's Chamber": In a three-inch white limestone cube, Figure BB, there are nine cubes in each face of the six faces of the cube itself, while in all there are 27 one-inch cubes. If this three-inch white limestone cube were painted black on the outside of its six faces, there would be eight one-inch cubes (at the eight corners of the cube) which would have three black faces, twelve one-inch cubes (at the centers of the twelve edges of the cube) which would have two black faces, and six one-inch cubes (One in the center of each of the six faces of the cube) which would have one black face, while the remaining one-inch cube would be completely white and would be contained within the three-inch white limestone cube, which was painted black on its exterior.

Again looking at Figure BB, it may seem somewhat Pythagorean to remark that the 12, the 8, the 6, and the 1 do mean something by indirect analogy. 12 has been used for the months of the year, the signs of the Zodiac, the gates of the "Holy City" the sons of Jacob and the tribes of the Hebrews, the disciples of Jesus, while 8 has been used in the eight-fold way of Buddha as well as the eight-fold way of Peter (11 Peter 1: 5,6,7,) and the 6 and the one bring to mind the six truncated pyramids of TAG-M which are anchored and oriented to *the cube of infinity*, the CHAMBER OF THE ENLIGHTENED and the CHAMBER OF THE GRAND ORIENT, displaced to a more or less degree by the Great Pyramid.

In order to understand the genuine science of man, everyone must become familiar with all fields of human endeavor, so that what is genuinely scientific in government, jurisprudence, psychiatry, psychology, etc. can be compared not only with the physical sciences and the speculative philosophies, but also with Brahmanism, Buddhism, Christianity, Mohammedism, Taoism, etc.

Every part of the earth, your planet, contains people as well as history from which much can be learned, while it is fast coming to a time when the bias and the prejudice of people will be laughed and ridiculed out of existence—and it will then become compulsory to keep an open mind. Open-minded persons realize that history must be interpreted today, in a great number of cases, by always keeping in mind the particular bias and prejudice of the historian, while most people have learned about shifting basis of propaganda

during the last forty-five years. It seems that the M-giants prepared the ancient time-capsule simply because it then appeared that our generation would be unable to advance to a saner civilization—and might even retrogress to the darkest of dark ages—unless the fundamental principle of man were able to be understood and used at the operation “Cross-Roads” of today’s human society.

It is actually astounding and amazing, when the true facts of history are known, how man has actually staggered down thru the centuries; how even our so-called vaunted races have exhibited the acme of barbarism and savagery; how it has been dimly and finally perceived thru slow mental evolution that man does have free will and choice between either ignorance and barbarism or correct knowledge and sanity. H.G. Wells, to whom science-fiction owed a debt, wrote “Fate of Homo Sapiens” which included a chapter on “American Mentality”—and it seems that Wells did not have too much hope for *the future of man*. And it has been said that “Without hope, the people perish.” Could the ancient time-capsule have been opened at a more reasonable time?

The six truncated pyramids and *the cube of infinity* of TAG-M could be somewhat symbolic of the seven days of the week—Sunday being symbolized by *the cube of infinity*. Too the Pleiades have been known as the seven stars and are referred to by a scored line in the entrance passageway to the Great Pyramid, according to Piazzi Smyth, who had been Astronomer Royal of Scotland.

The “Queen’s Chamber” in the

Great Pyramid, actually the lower light chamber of a Camera Lucida, has a seven symbol in the four walls, the floor, and the peaked roof, as is shown in Figure CC. The “Grand Niche” in the East (representing *the future of the physical events of nature*) wall of the “Queen’s Chamber”, among other meanings, apparently represents and symbolizes (1) *the combination of the mental picture in the present subjective instant of the mind of man of the present objective instant of the physical events of nature*, (2) *the past and the future of man—and the past and the future of the physical events of nature*.

According to McCarty in “The Great Pyramid Jeezeh”, the “Queen’s Chamber” contains the point of the vertical axis of the Great Pyramid in its South wall. It would appear that the six courses of masonry on the four walls of this chamber are symbolical of the six truncated pyramids of TAG-M. Just as the “King’s Chamber” is displaced into the South side of the Great Pyramid and represents the CHAMBER OF THE ENLIGHTENED, so the “Queen’s Chamber” is partially displaced in the North side of the Great Pyramid, which symbolizes *the present objective instant of the physical events of nature*, and represents the CHAMBER OF THE GRAND ORIENT.

The Kaaba, which is in a mosque at Mecca, has the form of a cube, just as the “Holy of Holies” of King Solomon’s Temple was a cube. There is a ‘black stone’ in the KAABA, said by some persons to have been the remains of a meteor which fell from the sky. The Mosque of Omar is on the truncated top of Mt.

Moriah in Jerusalem and covers certain out-croppings of rock which appear to have been of great importance to Abraham. It would appear that the descendants of Abraham and Hagar among the Mohammedans now have the most important site and symbol of their great ancestor.

A small college in Florida is based on the idea that "Authority is only justified at the bar of reason", which seems to be an excellent rule to be practiced by everyone. Talk is cheap—words are cheap—unless there is something of enough power to back up and support ideas, so that ideas can be acted upon and employed. Ideas of correct knowledge concerning the laws or action of nature in relation to man, are backed up by the fact that such laws are always enforced by a power much greater than man, the penetrating power of energy of the universe, the basis of life, itself.

The fundamental principle of man, discovered in 1932-33 and then found to have been keyed in the Great Pyramid, the displacement cornerstone of TAG-M, has been verified and will be disclosed in a way which can be readily understood by any intelligent person. The fundamental principle of man is of the greatest importance not only to the individual person, but also to human society as a whole, and its disclosure will mark a great forward stride in the mental evolution and the progress of the human race. In the disclosure of the fundamental principle of man, starting in the next Article of the TAG-M Series, there will be given the exact scientific basis for government, jurisprudence, psychiatry, psychology, etc., including comparison with other fields of human

endeavor. The readers of Amazing Stories will be given the opportunity of understanding new and unusual scientific discoveries—which would ordinarily be presented in various world scientific societies and which will be used in the near future by schools, colleges, and universities here and abroad.

It is to be distinctly understood that the TAG-M Series of Articles are not just an attempt to disclose a theory, but this method is used to disclose—for the understanding of people generally—verified and genuine scientific facts, some of which can be used by anyone in everyday life, and the value of these discoveries has been estimated by competent persons to be of far more worth than the combined debt of world nations.

It is almost inconceivable fully to realize the faith of the M-giants, those wonderful wise men of long ago, who apparently knew that beyond any question or shadow of a doubt their ancient time-capsule would be opened on time. The actual facts of this happening will forever change the attitude of people regarding the earth and the universe.

The M-giants apparently realized that the only way in which their time-capsule could be fully understood, was by complete analysis of every field of human endeavor in our time, which analysis resulted in the realization of not only now little was known by our civilization, but what is necessary to allow human society to be able successfully to evolve from the state of barbarism and savagery which has resulted primarily because the great majority of persons have had nothing upon which they can place confidence in a

world which seems to have gone sadly awry.

In the next Article, *the cube of infinity*, which is the basis for the geometrical symbol of time, will be presented in a way which will allow a better understanding of it, and the readers of Amazing Stories can be of the greatest assistance in this matter by asking questions about anything which may not seem clear.

It has been known for centuries that "Man is a hunter for correct knowledge", and the actual and genuine scientific facts which will be disclosed can only result, when understood, in a much happier life for anyone of you who desires to grasp them for his or her own.

The M-giants will seem to have been supermen to our generation, just as it was pointed out in Article 2 Ford, Edison, and Kettering would have appeared to be supermen to the people of 1849, but many in our generation and the great majority in future generations will be able to

appreciate the practical way in which the ancient time-capsule comes to our assistance with valuable information which can only result in courage and happiness for those who understand it.

Today, we are aware of the fact that there are no two people who think the same about everything, and there are no two people the same physically, if it be but for the fact that apparently each one of us has different finger-prints.

Many know that there should be something upon which all of us could agree. Friendship is based on trust, and the other factors that make friends are that people agree upon one main point or like certain traits in each other's character. When the fundamental principle of man is disclosed so that it can be readily seen that it belongs to everyone, do you believe that it can become the point upon which all can agree, so that friendship will result for peace instead of war?"

Read Article 7 Next Month

OPPORTUNITY PLUS

TO ANYONE with a speculative turn of mind, it is maddening to look through the books and magazines of a technical nature, to examine the department and hardware stores of our country, and then to realize relatively how few people take advantage of the tremendous opportunities they have for learning and building anything their hearts desire! In this richest country on Earth there is everything.

If a man wishes to experiment in radio, in radar, in TV, in chemistry, in mechanics, in astronomy, in biology, he can do so without a great outlay of money and everything will be at his fingertips. Tools are cheap, electric motors are a drug on the market, machines are commonplace and scientific instruments are everywhere. One

would think that under these circumstances it would be hard to walk across the street without meeting an amateur scientist. Unfortunately that isn't true. People so readily take things for granted that the experimenter and hobby worker is a rarity rather than a standard fixture. Of the hundred and fifty million people in the United States how many hundreds of thousand amateur experimenters are there? We'd hate to guess—but it isn't nearly as many as you'd think.

All right, let's get the tools and the machines and go to work. There are so millions of things to learn and so many millions of things to do, that we can never be bored. "We should all be as happy as kings!" —A. Morris



The CLUB HOUSE

Where science fiction fan clubs get together.

Conducted by ROG PHILLIPS

THIS MONTH we bring the winners of the prize contest for the best of 1948 in the fanzines. As you will remember, the first prize is fifty dollars, the second is twenty-five dollars, and the ten runner-ups are to each receive the price of a year's subscription to *Amazing Stories*.

There weren't too many entries. The rules were that the editor of the fanzine the item appeared in had to submit it, and like when you go fishing, the best ones probably got away, because the editor of the fanzine they appeared in had picked up his tent and folded. One in particular that I'm thinking of was Art Rapp's *Soma Racks*, that appeared in *Dream Quest*, which folded. Don Wilson could have sent it and other very fine items that appeared in his fanzine, but didn't.

Gorgon might have carried off the honors if Stan Mullen had submitted entries. In fact, almost any fanzine might have. Most of them had very excellent material during 1948.

All of which proves that fans aren't particularly interested in such contests. Since the object of the contest was to encourage fan activity, and since there's no sign of it having encouraged it a hundred dollars worth, we'll probably make the contest a little different next year.

Ray Palmer and I were the judges, so naturally we won the first and second prizes—huh? Crooked judging? Well, O.K., we'll be fair about it. We'll choose someone else to win the first two prizes. We already had anyway. But before I give you the names of the winners, I want to apologize to the editors of the current crop of fanzines for omitting the reviews this time, due to lack of space—the space being used to reproduce the entries of the prize winners, as many as we have room for. O.K.? And next month we'll be back with the fanzine reviews and maybe something about the Convention—personal observations and such, since I plan to attend. (It's a month away as I write this.)

In publishing the prize winning entries we hope that some of you wall flower fans will see the light and get into things yourself. You'll get a real thrill out of composing a "brain child" and seeing it published in a fanzine.

It wasn't easy to pick the winners. Every one of them had their points, and in all honesty I must say that I can't say

that either the first or second prize winner was unquestionably the best and second best entry. Maybe you readers will have something to say about it. Maybe you'll disagree with the way things went. Maybe you'll agree. There were so many standards by which the entries might be judged: nature of material, whether article, fiction, review, straight reporting, art work, poetry, etc.; writing ability or, more general, composing ability; talent; originality, or creative ability; or pure entertainment.

The most universally applicable standard of all is vividness. A story that takes you into itself so that you live is a great story however poorly written. A poem that makes you feel its thought and rhythm is a great poem. A picture that makes you see what its creator saw is art, even if it's merely a bunch of lines like in a cartoon. It need not be realism to be considered vivid. Humor is vivid if it makes you laugh, and read it "in sympathy" with its continuity. In other words, a good joke is vivid in a sense.

So vividness was the standard we judged by, and by that standard the first prize goes to—but first I want to tell you all about—O.K., O.K. I'll skip that. The first prize goes to the female of the species of homo superior or sapiens, depending on whether you live in the present or the future. It's a nice little bit of fiction entitled *OUTPOST*, and Marion Zimmer, 17-C, YWCA, 5 Lodge St., Albany, New York is the lucky gal who gets that fifty dollar first prize.

Marion Zimmer, together with Dorothy G. Quinn and Belle R. Kehl are the guiding lights of the *VAMPYRE SOCIETY*, that all-girl fanclub. The *VAMPYRES* are a little disorganized right now due to Belle Kehl, the public relations director, having been ill, and Marion having moved. You girl fans who want to join should send your 25c dues to Genevieve K. Stephens, 530 Mayer Avenue, Alma, Michigan. If you haven't already done so, write to the Vampyre president pro tem, Dorothy Quinn, 76 Second St., Albany, New York. Send her your home address and a short biography, and she will make sure you get in touch with Vampyres of similar interests. What? Do Vampyres have more than one interest? Ha ha.

Anyway, Marion "Astra" Zimmer won first prize and a check is being sent

her for fifty dollars. Here's her prize winning story; OUTPOST, that appeared in SPACEWARP, Dec., 1948:

OUTPOST

by MARION ZIMMER

Foreword: When SIEF—Solar Interstellar Exploration Force—landed their first ship since the Sol-Capella war on Deneb Six, they expected to find a world bare of humanity. SIEF had never before entered the star-cluster where Deneb's fifteen planets circled. But the planet, although incredibly desolate, bare of all remnants of civilized man, had not always been so. Men had been there. Solarians.

This was never made public. The Terran government, happy in its communalism, thought it would be detrimental to Terran morale should they know the fate of the Domesmen—that brave little band, exiled years ago from the Solar System, under the leadership of one of the greatest men the system has ever known, John Barss. The little band which Barss controlled had rebelled against the rigidly-organized Venus Autarchy, and vanished—completely. And the one trace of men which SIEF found on Deneb Six was a small fortress, deep in the forests, set within an enclosed space. The surrounding terrain bore traces of fire, but this fortress had been spared or had survived, and within it the men of SIEF found traces of the expedition—as well as the diary of that great leader.

The document was suppressed by Terran authorities; for the Venus Autarchy had been smashed less than a year after Barss' exile, and Venus had been taken over by the Communalists. Yet the diary of Barss is one of the greatest vindications ever written, of the autarchy.

This diary passed into my hands, as a descendant of that Barss, and as I read, I wondered. You, too, pause to wonder, Terrans.

THE DIARY

June 13-2917.

We came here last night. I think perhaps that we may be able to find a haven here on this lonely planet of Deneb. There is good water, breathable air, plant life with a chlorophyll base, and here, perhaps, we can settle with our women and children and build for ourselves the life that we could never win within the System. Tonight, we called a mass meeting and I proposed to destroy the ship that brought us here. Arn and Conner ask why we should tie ourselves down to one planet when there is an entire sun-system to conquer, but I am afraid that, with the ship, there might be too much temptation to return to Sol.

The matter rested unsolved. A party was sent out to scout. I think it best that we

should stay together for a time; we have seen no unfriendly natives as yet, but there is no way to tell, of course—

Krean and Alys the daughter of Maran were married tonight by the quaint old Terran ceremony—

June 30.

Mass meeting tonight. Thirty voted to destroy the ship, twenty-six to keep. Conner, who led the operation, suggested that the votes of the women be discounted, for all the women were with me in this. Naturally I vetoed such a step.

They refuse to yield, even to our majority, and Arn says that they will never allow us to destroy the ship. I reminded him that the majority must rule and that if we should ever return to Sol, as our children might do if we kept the ship, we were lost, and forever. Our only refuge lies in cutting all ties with the Solarians completely. Things stalled again. A child was born to one of the Martian women tonight. Twenty-five men, all but three married; twenty-two wives, and poor Garrik's widow; seven unmarried girls. Five old men, seven old women and forty-three children, nineteen of whom are still in arms.

July 23.

The ship was destroyed tonight. Conner has won over a majority, and when I refused it, threatened to kill me. Secretly, seven young men and some boys, too young to vote, destroyed the ship. The fools, can't he realize we can't risk any crazed and homesick person giving away our hiding place? The Solarians never meant us to find a home. If we're found within the Solarian limits, we'll be rayed out of the sky.

August first.

Novenus (our new town) progressing. Twelve houses.

There are humanoids here, little grey men with a complete lack of pigmentation. Hope they are friendly.

October 14.

Cornerstone of the Main Hall laid today.

October 17.

Manazu, the leader of the Natives, came to me today and asked if I would send the company doctor to their village to treat illnesses there. They have made no trouble so far; in fact, they seem to enjoy our company. There is only one colony of people here, the rest died out in a plague years ago, and this was a dying race.

Arn disappeared a week ago, and I thought he had been killed, but he turned up in the village this morning.

November 12.

Fire destroyed two of the houses in the square—

November 13.

I knew there would be trouble. We elected a council to rule and already there

is trouble. They want a communalist state like the one on Terra. Can't they see that with so few, and on a strange world, we need some control?

People are adjusting the sleep cycle pretty well to the 29-hour day. I still find it hard. I'm not as young as I used to be.

December 10th.

Conner made a teleradio. Has communicated with Terra. I ordered him put in confinement and Arn and a few others marched on the prison and set him free. Heaven grant the mad fool doesn't try to contact Venus.

December 18th.

The council has been dissolved. Have they forgotten they promised to let me guide them? It was I led them away. They have no knowledge. Arn has promised me safety if I stay clear. But what chaos will his rule bring?

December 23.

Manazu came to me secretly last night. He asked if it was with my consent that the village had spread to the native cave-town. I told him no, that I had no more power.

January 9, 1918.

A new year back on Solar planets. Here, nothing. I appealed to them to let the natives alone. They voted to take over the cave-town. I pleaded and then forbade. As a result I am imprisoned here and owe my life to a single vote.

I do not blame the people. The system never taught them wisdom in ruling, and they want to be free all at once rather than be gradually educated to it. They resented even my restraint, which was not much. What will become of us? There is only chaos here, and we had such high hopes—

February 12th.

The natives struck back. They have us in siege here. I am in my old command, but is it too late?

February 18th.

We can't hold out any longer.

I tried to surrender. Manazu promised that if we left their city in peace and turned Conner and Arn over to them, we could go free. Heaven knows those two should pay the price, but I can't agree to that—

February 25th.

Conner and his doubly-damned radio signals have given us away and Venus Fleetships are on their way here.

Arn insisted on a last stand against the natives, rather than placating them. We lost all but four men. Natives now twenty to our one. They'll have us soon.

March 2nd.

Tele showed Fleetships only three days away. If we could make peace with the natives they would shelter us in the Cave-town. Arn was killed today.

March 4th.

Fleet ships will come tomorrow. Have made a last appeal. Opinion hopelessly divided. No use.

March 5th.

This is the end. We might have found a refuge, but it would take a stronger leader than I, and a group of people willing to submit. It was not that I wished to rule. Arn and Conner had nothing to offer in place of my leadership except a nominal freedom. Freedom takes preparation and that, they did not have. We should have worked slowly toward that.

Freedom is the most dangerous of gifts. It is my fault, for I promised them freedom, where all I could really give them was a change of leaders and a little chance to work toward the slow coming of freedom. But to the minds of these born to slavery, the word freedom means only license—a lack of responsibility. I think they are com—

The manuscript ends here abruptly, and lying beside it we found a pen, still uncapped. We can only guess at the rest.

END

Second prize goes to Arthur H. Rapp with his Morgan Botts story, MASTERMIND, that appeared in TIMEWARP. Again vividness was the yardstick. Art is a prolific fan writer and a very industrious and capable fan publisher. He publishes SPACEWARP, which gives you plenty of entertainment each issue.

A check for twenty-five dollars goes to him for this story, and I'm frank to confess that it was really a tossup between it and the first prize winner. "What do YOU think?"

Anyway, the die is cast, cracks and all, and if you like Rapp's style you can get plenty more of it by subscribing to SPACEWARP, 2120 Bay St., Saginaw, Michigan.

MASTERMIND

by r-tRapp

"Telepathy," I said. "Fascinating phenomenon."

"Ghu drench telepathy!" retorted Morgan Botts bitterly, sloshing a pint or so of suds into his mouth. "I'd be a millionaire if it wasn't for telepathy."

"Don't talk with a mouthfull of beer," I advised him. "It sounded like you said you'd be a millionaire if it wasn't for telepathy."

Botts gulped.

"I did say it!" he roared, pounding the marble-topped tavern table with his stein at each word. "Want me to repeat it? I'd be a mil—"

"OQ, OQ," I soothed him. "But that's a strong statement. Give with the explanation."

"You don't believe me," Botts muttered reproachfully, raising a fresh beer somewhat unsteadily toward his bushy white

mustache. "Always I've told you the Ghubitten truth, and still you don't believe me! Skeptic! Whippersnapper!"

"Don't get your jets in a chain-reaction," I told the stfan-inventor. "I never said I didn't believe you. But I gotta have supporting evidence for a generalization like that, don't I? Scientific method and all that sort of thing, you know."

With infinite care Botts eased his half-empty glass to the table and saw that it was sitting firmly. This momentous matter disposed of, he clamped his gnarled hands on the table edge, rested his chin on the marble between them, and raised his eyes to peer intently into my face.

"Wash a great prosheen, uh, prozine editor onesh," he hiccupped. "Great prosheen. Great." He thought this over for a while, then added, "*Extragalactic Epics*."

"Never heard of it." I took a cool swig of beer myself.

"Yer a liar," snarled Botts. "I just said it, so you *must* have heard of it. Whatsa matter, ya deaf?"

"What were we talking about, anyhow?" I asked, confused.

"Palepathy — uh — thilepitty — uh — thought — transference."

"Oh, What's that?"

"I'll show you," said Botts. "Look, I'll concentrate on something. You make your mind blank, and see if you can read my thought."

"OQ"

"Ready?"

"Go ahead."

There was a long silence, broken only by an occasional hiccup from Botts. I began getting bored. I wasn't receiving any telepathic message from him; I got no impressions at all, though I tried to keep my mind blank.

I looked at Botts. His bleary eyes were closed; his unshaven chin still rested on the tabletop. I wasn't sure, but he seemed to be snoring.

"T'hell with it," I thought, reaching for the one remaining beer, which stood in the center of the table.

Quick as a striking snake, Botts' hand flashed out and seized the stein. He sat up straight again. "See?" he said.

"Huh?" I asked over my shoulder, twisted around to signal the bartender for more beers.

"You got my message," crowed Botts triumphantly. "I concentrated on beer, and you thought of the same thing."

"You're nuts—" I started but the stfan-inventor broke in before I could continue.

"I know what you're about to say," he told me. "I'm not such a bad telepath after all. You don't have to tell me that, Bud, I knew it all the time."

"Where the hell does the millionaire business come in?" I asked to change the subject.

"It's quite a story," said Botts, sipping complacently. "It all began when one of the assistant editors of *Extragalactic Epics* turned in an article about a jerk named Mepesto the Magnificent, who was

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supposed to be a mind-reader."

"Fake," I said. "They have stooges in the audience, and a set of code signals."

"That's what I told my assistant," Botts nodded. "I pointed out that we were publishing a science-fiction mag, not an astrology journal. However, he insisted that Mepesto the Magnificent had read minds under conditions where there was no possibility of trickery. Eventually I agreed to meet this alleged mind-reader and see for myself."

The bartender arrived with fresh malt. We drank a while in silence. Then Botts resumed:

"Mepesto the Magnificent came to my office. He was a towering, hawk-faced, mysterious-looking character, and his demonstration amazed me. He had me write numbers on a slip of paper, then held it against his forehead and told me what I had written. He had me concentrate on some acquaintance, and told me who I was thinking of. He named the color of my favorite necktie after I mentally visualized it. And dozens of other demonstrations."

"Nuts," I said. "You were neatly tricked. These mind-readers and their clever systems have been exposed time and again. For example, as he held those slips of paper to his forehead, Mepesto the Magnificent passed them in front of a light, or a window, so that he could read what was on them. He'd investigated your habits and preferences so he could deduce what you would pick to concentrate on after he suggested a general classification."

"At any rate," said Botts after a sip of beer, "it was an impressive performance. I knew that here lay the key to a fortune. *Extragalactic Epics* was on the verge of bankruptcy anyhow, because of rising prices and paper shortages and such, so I felt no compunctions in abandoning my editorial job to become Mepesto's manager."

"Sounds like a good deal, at that," I mused.

"Precisely," said Botts, brushing a wisp of foam from his moustache. "I'd sized this Mepesto the Magnificent up as a guy with great acting ability, but pretty much of a dope otherwise. I knew once I got him signed to an ironclad contract, I'd be set for life. I could hardly keep from laughing aloud as he picked up his fountain-pen to sign the contract—and then my dreams came crumbling to ruin."

"What do you mean?" I asked. Botts fortified himself with a vast swig of beer before replying.

"I'd overlooked one small detail," he admitted ruefully. "Mepesto hesitated, looked at me, looked back at the papers, then picked up the pitcher of ice-cold beer on my desk, poured it over my head, and stalked out of the office muttering to himself in Arabic."

"Great jumping Ghu—why?"

"You see," Botts said softly, "Mepesto the Magnificent really could read minds!"

* * *

The ten runner-ups were

- (1) James V. Taurasi
137-03 32nd Ave.
Flushing, N.Y.

"Why F.F.M.'s Novels are Cut."

- (2) John Grossman
1037 W. 18th
Des Moines, Iowa

The back cover illustration for the October, 1948, issue of *SCIENCE, FANTASY, AND SCIENCE FICTION*, published by Frank Dietz, Jr., P.O. Box 696, Kings Park, L.I., New York.

- (3) Redd Boggs
2215 Benjamin St. N.E.
Minneapolis 18, Minn.

- (4) Wilkie Conner
1718 McFarland Ave.
Gastonia, S. Car.

Co-authors of "Lovecraft: Hooray! : Phooey!" in the April 1948 issue of *SPACEWARP*.

- (5) Bill Groover
113 N. Porter St.
Saginaw, Mich.

Part one of "The Great STF Broadcast", January issue of *SPACEWARP*.

- (6) Franklin M. Dietz Jr.
P.O. Box 696
Kings Park, L.I., New York

The article "Robot Brain" in the spring, 1948 issue of *S., F., & S.F.*

- (7) William James
Big Bay, Michigan

The story, "The Eyes of Roger Akner", in the October *SPACEWARP*.

- (8) Wrai Ballard
Blanchard, North Dakota

The story, "Perfection", in the June *SPACEWARP*.

- (9) Donn Brazier
1329 N. 33rd St.
Milwaukee 8, Wis.

The story "A Man of Imagination" in the June *SPACEWARP*.

- (10) Thomas S. Gardner
155 Jackson Avenue
Rutherford, N.J.

The review, "1947 in Science Fiction" in *Fantasy-Times*.

The order of listing is not necessarily the order of grading. There was an entry from England that should have been included in the prizes "Contact", by Michael Tealby, but was passed by because of the problem of special handling for a subscription and the problem of special work involved in getting two dollars and a half into England.

Each of the ten runner ups will receive a check for two dollars and a half, which they may either use for a year's subscription to *Amazing Stories* or in whatever way they choose.

That's all, folks. Next month we'll be back with the regular reviews of fanzines. Until then...

—ROG PHILLIPS

SCIENTIFIC FREEDOM

AT MOUNT Palomar Observatory there is now operating a telescope which has received considerably less publicity than its big brother the two hundred inch reflector. This telescope which is used in mapping vast portions of the sky because of its wide aperture is the forty-eight inch "Schmidt" wide angle reflector. The story behind the Schmidt 'scope is rather interesting as it shows perfectly the value of unhampered, undirected, disinterested scientific research.

The telescope of this design was invented about twenty years ago by a German optician named Bernard Schmidt. Schmidt was an extremely eccentric and unconventional worker. He was uninterested in money and worked only on the jobs he liked. His enthusiasm for optics was unlimited. When he was only a boy of twelve, he ground his first lens, from the bottom of a beer bottle, using sand as an abrasive and polishing agent! When he was a grown optical worker it is said that he liked working while wearing a Prince Albert coat and striped pants! Regardless of these personal idiosyncracies, he was a sound thinker.

His major contribution, the Schmidt telescope, is much like a regular reflecting telescope except that before the mirror is a large diameter very narrow corrective lens that permits the stars to be photographed much more clearly and over a much larger area than can be done with ordinary reflectors and refractors. The Schmidt telescope and the Palomar Observatory is designed to map the Heavens and will be engaged in that program for many years to come.

The sidelight on the Schmidt development however, that creates the clearest picture of how science enters into apparently totally unrelated fields, is dramatically shown by the link between the Schmidt 'scope and television!

No one would imagine there'd be any connection, yet in many types of projection television sets of the large screen variety, a Schmidt optical train provides the large clear image! Thus a discovery in one branch of science enters another in which it ordinarily would be thought to have no connection. Schmidt himself would probably be turning over in his grave if he realized his system was being used in such a radically different field, TV. Astronomers, professional and amateur, have of course seized on the Schmidt and there are many in construction and use all over the world. Recently one was installed at the Johannesburg Observatory in South Africa.



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GREAT BOOKS IN SCIENCE FICTION

by MORRIS TISH

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

OF INTEREST to all readers of AMAZING STORIES and lovers of fantastic fiction is the tremendous upsurge of fantasy book publishing in America today. This is true not only of the major book publishers like Crown and Random House, who now realize that a large buying public exists for book fiction of this nature, but also to the specialist-publishers, firms established and operated solely to present fantasy books to this ever-increasing market. We here at AMAZING STORIES have seen this significant trend, and because we know that our readers are interested in the more important books of this nature now being published, we have arranged for Morris Tish, fantasy critic and authority, to conduct a monthly book review column in the pages of this magazine. Mr. Tish has had not only a long reading background in this field, but is an authority on literature generally; as a matter of fact, he teaches English literature at one of Chicago's Junior Colleges.

For the first few issues he will cover the most interesting and significant fantasy books of late 1948, and then, as published, the newer titles. Copies of new fantasy books should be sent to him, in care of this magazine, for listing and review.

—Raymond A. Palmer

ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE

FOR EVERY science-fiction fan this magnificent anthology is an absolute must. It is a unique combination of quality and quantity, and the latter is something missing in many science-fiction books today. There are no less than thirty-five separate stories and almost a thousand pages of absorbing reading. There isn't a single bad story in the lot, although obviously not all of them come up to the quality of such masterpieces as *Forgetfulness*, by "Don A. Stuart"; *The Blue Giraffe*, by L. Sprague de Camp; Requiem of the famous "Future-History" Series, by Robert A. Heinlein; and *Brain*, by S. Fowler Wright. Such outstanding yarns as these are complemented by *Symbiotica* by E. F. Russell, one of the few examples of successful humorous adventure; *Nightfall*, Isaac Asimov's truly thought-provoking account of a civilization which has never known the stars and what happens when an eclipse reveals them; *The Twonkey*, Lewis Padgett's terrifying picture of an ordinary household subjected to an ordinary mechanical contrivance—a contrivance ordinarily found only in the

fourth dimension; and *Who Goes There?* by John W. Campbell, Jr., the finest novellette in all science-fiction.

In addition, there is an extremely thoughtful and provocative introduction by the editors. No matter what the reader's preferences may be, he will surely find them included in this splendid collection.

THE CHECKLIST OF FANTASTIC LITERATURE

CERTAINLY the most significant book to be published in 1948 for the fantasy reader and enthusiast in this CHECKLIST, a reference bibliography that modestly sets about to list "every known fantastic book in the English language". It comprises a little over 5000 such titles, with all the varieties of the genre: weird, fantasy, and science-fiction, arranged with complete bibliographical information, and equipped with a double-index—one by title and one by author. That such a major task should have been undertaken at all, in a heretofore uncharted field of literature, is something commendable and significant; the book, therefore, is a major contribution to the reading, collecting, and enjoyment of fantasy.

As one might expect in a pioneer task, some weaknesses are present, but this writer believes that some flaws are inevitable in a work of this nature. For just as one may not agree with any reference book's interpretation of any given thing or event, so can any carping critic point to small and isolated flaws within this book. That a small percentage of errors do exist in a work of this size and nature are certainly not grounds for rejecting the entire work as a whole, for despite the fact that some titles covered are minimal fantasy at best, that some titles should never have been carried at all, and that some titles were overlooked—still, the fact remains that the proportion of these is very small, and in the overall picture the book emerges as the finest and most useful project ever attempted of this nature for this field.

Aside from the listings of books, this reviewer found the Publisher's Preface enjoyable, for in an interesting manner Mr. Korshak has shown why such a book was needed, and by whom. In his thorough history of prior attempts at bibliography in this field, and in the trials and tribulations encountered in completing the present volume, he has written a most delightful essay. And of equal interest is the Editor's Introduction, an absorbing and thought-provoking outline and definition of the elements that constitute fantasy; here-

tofore a good definition has always been lacking, it having usually been stated in the most general terms when it did not actually beg the question. Mr. Bleiler's Appendix Notes are a delight to the bibliophile, as they dip into and lay the ghost of some of the most unusual and puzzling mysteries in fantasy book collecting.

In short, this is the bible for every fantasy fan, a reference book that he must have to consider himself informed about the field.

EDISON'S CONQUEST OF MARS

MOST READERS of AMAZING STORIES have heard of the great pioneers of modern science-fiction. Jules Verne and H. G. Wells. But unless they were reading AMAZING STORIES back in the late twenties, when it was the only science-fiction magazine being published, they are probably unaware of Garrett Putnam Serviss, who belongs in the company of these other modern pioneers. EDISON'S CONQUEST OF MARS was printed first in the New York "Evening Journal" and has been buried since 1898 in the Library of Congress files of this paper. Carcosa House has done a signal service in capturing all of the antique flavor of this venerable work by reproducing exactly the original voluminous (and, to the modern reader, rather quaint) illustrations. The book has been handsomely published in a limited, number edition as a true "labor of love".

The title itself indicates the nature of the plot, and the reader may be interested in knowing that it is a pseudo-sequel to H. G. Wells' famous THE WAR OF THE WORLDS. The dwellers of Earth, under the leadership of the famous scientist Edison, equip a fleet to go to Mars to retaliate for the damage done by the Martians in an earlier ill-fated, punitive expedition against the Earth. The carnage is terrifying and may upset queasy modern stomachs.

This book, moreover, has an interest that extends to the lay reader as well as the bibliophile. Good stories do not age, even though style and tricks of narration may vary sharply. As soon as the reader accustoms himself to women "who burst into cherry laughs" and the rather pedantic phrasing of those times, he will find this book as fascinating as did the readers of the "Journal" more than two generations ago, and the readers of AMAZING in the twenties who were enthralled by a COLUMBUS OF SPACE and THE SECOND DELUGE by the same author.

THE SKYLARK OF SPACE

HISTORICALLY, this novel which first appeared in 1927 is a landmark in science-fiction, and is the first volume in the great Skylark saga. It is to Dr. Smith's credit that he broadened the frontiers of science-fiction when he began this series as no

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writer had done before him. Succeeding authors have enlarged the field immensely since the SKYLARK OF SPACE first appeared, but it still remains, despite great deficiencies in characterization and style, a fascinating book to read. The reason for this fascination is easy to understand: his plots are so fast-moving that the reader is catapulted into one fantastic adventure after another. In this story the reader who journeys to distant Osnome and participates in the bloody conflict there, and in the epic struggle between the super-scientists, DuQuenne and Seaton, has difficulty in putting the book down. Dr. Smith has created entire new universes in which Promethian man triumphs and every science-fiction reader will find much enjoyment in this book.

THE CARNELIAN CUBE

THOSE EMINENT writers, Fletcher Pratt and L. Sprague de Camp, combine their talents here to produce another of their humorous fantasies. Archeologist Arthur Cleveland Finch scoffed at the thought that the Carnelian Cube was a "dream stone"—until he went to sleep one night with that curiously inscribed ancient charm beneath his head and awoke in another world, the world of "rationalism". His adventures here are most intriguing, but they pale beside the novelty of his next scene of activity, the world of the "individualists." Such unique characters as Colonel Richard Fitzhugh Lee, the President of the Pegasus Literary Society of Memphis, a combination Southern Colonel and jealous telepath; and Miss Sonia Kirsch, the luscious nightingale of old Memphis, a highly amorous wench, combine to make life extremely interesting for our hero. Before, however, Finch becomes permanently defunct as a result of his relationship with these two (conjure the difficulties of thinking sweet thoughts about a man's mistress, when the man can read your mind!), he escapes to the strangest land of all, the land of the Freudian Psychoanalysts.

While this book is not quite up to the standards of some of the other work of these two authors, it is nevertheless, a diverting (and at times) racy tale. It is definitely not great literature, but it will offer a pleasant few hours to any reader desiring amusement.

OUT OF THE UNKNOWN

THIS IS an extremely interesting collection of fantasy stories by a well-known and well-liked fantasy author and his very popular wife; all of which appeared in magazine form a few years ago. The long novelette which opens the book, *The Sea Thing*, is an absorbing tale which combines the interest of a magnificent adventure story by Stevenson with a supernatural element added for greater impact.

The volume also contains two of the

famous "Wish" stories of E. Mayne Hull. In *The Ultimate Wish* the reader is introduced to Lola Pimmons, a woman who desires to have all of her problems solved at once, but who is granted only one wish. In *The Wishes We Make* a ruthless and vengeful man wages a grim fight for survival aided in his struggles by the power to realize six wishes.

The other stories are *The Patient*, a man's struggle against cancer; *The Witch*, a grim little vignette which ends with defeat to the powers of evil; and the final story, *The Ghost*, which is regarded by van Vogt himself as his best effort to date. It is the longest tale in the book, but in the opinion of this writer, is not as successful as *The Sea Thing*, which alone is worth the price of admission.

STRANGE PORTS OF CALL

AUGUST DERLETH, who edits this anthology, has won considerable fame with his Arkham House press, from which emanates some of the best weird fiction in America today. This book, however, is not designed alone for enthusiasts of the weird, but for the general science-fiction public. It is true that the titans of the weird genre do appear. H. P. Lovecraft, an especial favorite of Derleth's, is represented by the lengthy and magnificent *At the Mountains of Madness*. Clark Ashton Smith, Henry Kuttner, Frank Belknap Long, and other familiar weird authors appear. Weird stories, it must be candidly confessed, are not of keen interest to this reviewer, hence he feels quite happy recommending the notable science-fiction yarns of these authors.

Among the best stories in the book are three tales of man's future worlds: *For Centaurus* by A. E. van Vogt; *Thunder and Roses* by Theodore Sturgeon; and *The Green Hills of Earth* by Robert A. Heinlein. Each of these stories is distinguished not only for originality of concept, but for manner of presentation.

The literary quality of this anthology, as a whole, is extremely high, and it is especially recommended to those readers who wish to convince skeptical friends that the fiction they love need not be patronized nor apologized for. For those who are buying sparingly, the book is recommended from another point of view—that of economy. Although not as large as some of the other current anthologies, it still supplements them admirably by virtue of its twenty excellent stories.

WHO GOES THERE?

WHO GOES THERE? is a baker's half dozen of some of the most significant science-fiction short stories ever published. John W. Campbell, Jr. ("Don A. Stuart"), as every science-fiction reader knows, has long been one of the most important editors and authors in this field and has put to paper some of the finest and

most thrilling fantastic adventure yarns ever written. Of the seven tales in this volume, three will be ranked by most authorities as all time greats. The title story *Who Goes There?* is not a short story at all, but a lengthy novelette that illustrates Campbell's unique gift for evoking a mood. The story deals with a particularly horrifying menace that comes from another world and appears in the midst of a small band of men exploring in the Atlantic. The particular horror of the creature lies in the fact that it can assume any living form and is readily divisible. The tension and fear brooding in this camp as a result of this visitation, and the final sense of glorious victory (by no means a forced happy ending or a Garrison finish) is conveyed to the rear with magnificent skill.

The two other stories that deserve special mention are the companion pieces *Twilight* and its sequel *Night*, both of which deal with Earth in the far-distant future. *Twilight* is concerned with the concept of men who have forgotten their greatness and are lonely, puzzled, and unimportant surrounded by the majesty of the mightiest accomplishments of their race. *Night* takes the reader to the end—not only of Earth, but of the Solar System, when the entire mechanism is worn down. No global explosions—as T. S. Eliot said “not with a bang but a whimper”—the whole mechanism has simply run down with old age. Both of these stories are completely successful in their effort to provoke a special mood-reaction in the reader.

Some of the other provocative stories are *Blindness*, a tale of a modern Prometheus who returns to earth to find that his efforts to snatch atomic energy from the sun were in vain; and *Elimination*, a tale which points out that knowledge of the future leads to inevitable tragedy.

The book is handsomely printed and bound, and has a striking and unusual dust-wrapper by Hannes Bok. To miss this book is to deprive yourself of a most enjoyable reading experience.

SKYLARK THREE

SKYLARK THREE, though a complete story in itself, continues the adventures of Richard Seaton, Marc DuQuesne, Dunark of Osnone, and others introduced in SKYLARK OF SPACE, the earlier novel in the trilogy. Indeed, Dr. Smith's forte for introducing strange civilizations and swift adventure is never more evident than in these pages.

Seaton encounters the Fenachrome, a malignant, semi-human race from a distant solar system whose plans, as one might expect, encompass the conquest of the entire galaxy. Seaton (whose scientific knowledge is inferior to these creatures) travels to many planets to find a race whose knowledge will enable him to overcome the Fenachrome. En route he visits



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such places as Osnone, Dazor, the intriguing Urvania—a water-covered planet whose inhabitants are partly amphibious, and the fog-shrouded globe of the Fenachrome. The pictures of these strange planets are drawn with Smith's usual attention to detail, and the final encounter with the Fenachrome is excitingly depicted.

Smith's chronic faults are always evident: the awkward love passages which would disgrace any of the women's magazines, and the pedantic and old-fashioned handling of conversation which reminds one distressingly of the Rover Boys; but Smith's admirers will doubtlessly overlook these faults. It is a pleasure, however, to find this old classic in-print once again, since its original publication in AMAZING STORIES back in 1930.

LEST DARKNESS FALL

IT SEEMS always the custom in science-fiction that when our hero, undergoing the vicissitudes of time travel, is suddenly thrust back into a former historical era, he is magnificently able to control his destiny by reason of the fact that he is an expert duelist, a brilliant chemist, a notable metallurgist and a renowned astronomer. Mr. de Camp, however, poses the interesting problem of Martin Padway, a simple archeologist, who is suddenly placed in Sixth Century Rome with no more equipment than a present-day knowledge of Latin. However, our archeologist has a conscience, and this conscience makes him realize that it is up to him to prevent the civilized world from falling into the Dark Ages, so soon to engulf Europe.

To make a living and to try to shore up civilization, he undertakes to introduce inventions like gun powder, printing presses, and clocks—with only two drawbacks: the gun powder does not explode, and his clocks simply refuse to run! Prudently resolving to steer clear of women, war and politics, he finds himself up to his neck in all three; the most interesting complication being a bloodthirsty Gothic Princess who wants to marry Padway and poison everyone else. The hilarious complications which ensue as he finally succeeds in his plans make very pleasant reading, although the book does not maintain the scintillating humor with which it begins. It is an attractive job of bookmaking, and for the reader who wants a story that outdoes Twain's CONNECTICUT YANKEE, this is highly recommended.

DIVIDE AND RULE

TWO delightfully Lewis Carrollish tales of tomorrow make up the present volume. Each story is complete and will provide several hours entertainment for the reader who likes his adventure unusual,

blended with threads of humor and satire.

Divide and Rule is a story of the future in which feudal chivalry is imposed upon humanity by the "hoppers", invaders from another world, as the easiest way to keep mankind under subjection. The story concerns itself with Sir Howard Van Slyck, second son of the Duke of Poughkeepsie, a large and energetic—but not too clever young man—who finds himself, amazingly enough, the spearhead of the revolution against the hoppers. The reader will be extremely amused by the incongruous mixture of the appurtenances of chivalry and modern technology.

The Stolen Dormouse seems to be a conscious parody of *Romeo and Juliet*; only this time, the Montagues and Capulets become the Crosleys and Strombergs, rival companies or clans of the American Empire, who engage in vicious battle over a stolen semi-corpsé (The Dormouse), an engineer in a state of suspended animation. White-collared Horace Crosley Juniper-Hallett is elevated to the rank of business man, decorated with his badge of office (a fountain pen and brief case), falls in love with a girl of the opposite clan, and then the fun begins.

Both yarns are highly-amusing slightly wacky novella, guaranteed for pleasant reading in any weather.

THE WORLD OF A

THE popularization of semantics by Stuart Chase and Hayakawa of the original theories as expounded by such men as Alfred Korzybski and I. E. Richards has probably made this subject passingly familiar to most readers of science-fiction. In any event, the subject has been used by a number of writers of science-fiction during the past ten years, but until van Vogt none of them has built a complete novel about a civilization which is guided in every aspect of life by the principles of semantics. Van Vogt, with this background, has written a very strange adventure story concerning one Gilbert Gosseyn, who finds himself the pawn of intergalactic forces in their struggle for conquest. His confusion as he attempts to solve the problem of why he does not lay down and die when he is killed is not to be compared to the confusion of the reader as he attempts to solve the much simpler problem of what is going on.

What might have been a swashbuckling adventure yarn is overloaded with pretentious attempts at erudition and shocking lapses from what one would think were the ABC's of good narrative writing. One example of this ostentation is the use of extracts of semantic psychology at the head of each chapter. Unfortunately, van Vogt has not seen fit to make these passages relevant to the action of the chapters they head.

Finally, it is difficult for this reviewer to understand why van Vogt himself regarded this work so highly in a recent issue

of "The Arkham Sampler", our humble opinion being that it is hardly worth the attention given it by many of the so-called "experts".

THE FOURTH BOOK OF JORKENS

A BRAHAM LINCOLN once pointed out to an author whose book he didn't like, yet whom he did not wish to offend, "those who like this sort of book will like it very much." The same way he said for Dunsany's work. His character Jorkens is a gregarious raconteur whose stories have a definite Munchausen-like quality, and this anthology contains some thirty-three of these short anecdotes. Unless one is a Dunsany fancier, he is advised to take this book in small doses. Your reviewer found, unhappily that when read through at one sitting, the book tended to pall.

There are tales of science-fiction in the outre concepts and inventions of Dr. Caber—*Making Fine Weather*, *The Strange Drug of Dr. Caber*, and others; of the frankly supernatural—*The Haunting of Hainthans-town*, *Jorkens in White Wood*, *Mgamu*; and tales of the principles of evil, like *A Deal with the Devil*; but the majority are tales which defy classification. All of them are written with the distinctive style that has made Dunsany famous in English literature. However, as has already been mentioned, many readers are apt to find this same style a bit wearisome.

AND SOME WERE HUMAN

THE STORIES of Lester del Rey have been long honored by all lovers of good fantasy, and here in one book are nine short stories and three novelettes that are some of the best examples of his work. The stories range from a hauntingly simple tale of those who may come after man disappears, to an hilarious adventure in mishap and superstition. Some of the stories included are *Hereafter, Inc.*, a pleasant little fable concerning the trial of a Puritan (called, fittingly enough, *Porta*) who discovers that the after life is not rewarding him properly for the sinless existence he led on earth; *The Day is Done*, a discussion of the impact of the Cro-Magnons upon the Neanderthals; and two stories with a mythological basis—*Forsaking All Others*, which deals with a dryad's love for a human being, and *Copper-smith*, a charming account of an elf's adventures in modern America.

There are other types of stories as well: the pure adventure, as exemplified by the whimsical tale *The Luck of Ignatz*; *Dark Mission*; and what might be termed one of the most intriguing gadget stories ever written, the problem of the perfect robot woman, *Helen O'Lox*. Other stories defy description, but will remain in one's memory a long, long time: the touching *The Renegade*; *The Wings of Night*; and the grim,

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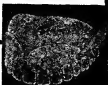
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There is a foreword by the author which ends with the hope that the reader will get one-tenth as much enjoyment from these stories as he did in writing them. Del Rey may rest assured on that score!

FINAL BLACKOUT

WHEN THIS story first appeared as a magazine serial in 1940, it was widely hailed as a magnificent story—but that actually the subject was really not science-fiction at all; the only aspect that placed it in this field is that it is laid in the future, in the last stages of a devastating world war.

Two reasons for the popularity of this story are to be found in this present book version: the magnificent depiction of the protagonist, the Lieutenant (one of Hubbard's neat touches is never giving him any name, so that while he is an extremely well-drawn individual, he also becomes a symbol of a class of mankind); and the realization missed by so many other science-fiction authors that any future war, no matter how great a technological level it begins on will ultimately reach a state wherein infantry once more resumes its role as the queen of battle. This latter aspect of warfare, though not apparent at first, becomes obvious when it is realized how much of a drain the tremendous technological development must be to keep planes in the air, precisely-built artillery shells in the cannon, and all the other intricate apparatus of modern warfare functioning. As soon as the atomic weapons have done their damage, this technology must break down. This is Habbard's thesis, and granted that enmity persists, the war will continue on only the most primitive of levels. In this set-up then, the field officer of junior rank becomes the important figure, and it is through his excellence that the company, or regiment, will survive.

FINAL BLACKOUT is a completely realistic and definitely "off trail" book, and is one from which the reader will derive much thought-provoking material, if but barren comfort for the future.

THE EXPANDING HORIZONS OF SCIENCE

By L. TAYLOR HANSEN

When the American Astronomical Society, affiliated with the American Association for the Advancement of Science met during the last days of June and the first of July 1948 at the Mt. Wilson Observatory, it was to honor the telescope which has given man his greatest advance of knowledge since the days of Copernicus and Galileo.* That step came in 1924 and it was made

by the 100 inch telescope on Mt. Wilson.

For a moment let us go back to those great scientists of the past who envisioned a global world spinning around the sun, instead of a flat world covered by a night sky in which the stars were windows through which peeped the light of Heaven. The religious picture was not easily abandoned. Came Milton, who with his magnificent English, strove to fix forever the old religious concept of the universe. "Paradise Lost" is a beautiful protest against the advances of science. Would that the blind bard could only have envisioned the far greater magnificence of reality! The lights which he thought were windows, were a sparkling swarm of a billion suns—a swarm which dwarfed our day star to a non-entity, and our little world to a grain of sand upon the shores of eternity.

In this swarm of suns there were certain sparkling swarm of a billion suns of a billowy spots and certain dark places which puzzled the astronomers. The fuzzy bits of light were thought to be flaming gasses—bits of evolving suns perhaps. The dark places there considered to be holes through which we looked into nothingness—to a void beyond the reach of any suns.

It was a picture not altogether without a shudder, this swarm of suns which clung together in a black expanse of endlessness, and against which the last few giants sparkled like jewels against black velvet. Yet the picture was not entirely correct. Much of what the scientists saw on the photographic plates which were being made nightly all over the world, caused more than a passing interest. There were certain winking stars, known as variables. One type, called the Cepheid,** gave away its distance. A Miss Leavett of Harvard Observatory and Dr. Harlow Shapley forged very important links of evidence in the study of these stars.

Then came the 100-inch telescope with its much greater power to separate an apparent single star into its actual parts. Thus stars which had to now been thought of as a single light were shown to be composed of different suns. When the power of the instrument was then turned on one of the larger spirals thought to be but a star cluster in our swarm of suns, Cepheid variables were discovered which told us that they were nearly a million light years away. Astronomers read the meaning in each other's eyes, and the power of the 100 inch was turned on the fuzzy spots. They too were sun swarms. The size of man's visible universe had suddenly burst into gigantic distance which included more than a hundred million times as many sun-swarms as ours. Nor is

*Cal Tech and Palomar were also visited by the astronomers.

**Named from the Constellation where first discovered.

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this all, for apparently they are just as thick upon the rim of the horizon of the 100-inch as they are nearby. Science had taken the greatest step forward since the time of Copernicus and Galileo!

The lights of Los Angeles and Pasadena, foaming in luminescence about the foot of Mt. Wilson, were not too bright in 1924 when the great telescope was trained upon the puzzles of the heavens, but from the first, Mars was a great disappointment. There was a turbulence in the California air which Lowell had not experienced in Arizona. It was soon realized that the giant reflector not only magnified the object but also the dust particles in the atmosphere, and a long exposure of Mars made it impossible to learn anything. The study of Mars was then abandoned for the other marvels of the sky.

The telescope was swung upon the dark spots which had been thought of as windows to the void. They were instead found to be black dust obscuring the light of the stars behind them. They were the debris of some catastrophe of which we might only guess. Perhaps two giant suns had collided, or one had exploded, in the dim ages before our planet had been born.

Again the great instrument was swung upon the flaming nebula of Orion. This time it was not a swarm of suns, but indeed a cloud of flaming gases some ten light years in diameter which had apparently exploded from a center and spread outward in typical explosive trails not unlike earthly atomic bomb pictures on a vast cosmic scale, enveloping the nearby suns in a veil of fire.

As time went on, man came to learn that not only our own Milky-Way Galaxy, but all of the other island-universes are whirling upon themselves. Even as early as 1916, it was known that the sun was moving through space, probably about some massive body. The quest for more information at that time, the astronomers tell us, was considered hopeless. Today the facts have gradually been revealed. With reference to the nearest stars, our sun is moving at the rate of twelve miles per second. The orbit is apparently a great ellipse some seventy thousand light-years across. (The distance that it takes light to travel in one year is the astronomical unit for the almost inconceivable distances with which astronomy must deal.) The attraction is the sum total of suns and matter in our own Milky-Way Galaxy. Our speed is of the order of two hundred miles per second, and it will take us in the neighborhood of two hundred million years to complete one revolution.

Not that all this information was obtained from the one instrument. It is the sum total of many minds working with many instruments. Drs. E. P. Hubble, F. R. Moulton, and others almost too numerous to mention have made their contributions. And the information is still being accumulated.

We know now that all of the other galax-

ies are also whirling. The spectroscope tells us that. Even as our sun whirls about its pinwheel of suns and we whirl about our sun, so all matter whirls. As Dr. Underwood in the July 1948 Scientific Monthly speaks suggestively of the atomic structure as electrons which whirl about their protons and neutrons, so perhaps still smaller unknown are whirling about the nuclei of unguessed subatoms. "Truly on any scale, we live in a whirling universe."

Thus man is learning about the structure of things, and as he looks out toward the horizon of the 100-inch, he has begun to wonder other problems into existence. Einstein took the lead in this matter. Is it possible, the great physicist said, in essence, that man has reached the limits of his visible universe? If a ray of light, passing a massive object, bends slightly, (and apparently it does so bend), then, in a universe where the amount of matter is finite, will not that ray of light describe a giant curve about the bulk of the matter, (in this case, galaxies) which it passes? Such a fact would make it impossible for us to see anything outside of our own visible universe. In other words, we would have a fixed horizon, much as we have a fixed horizon on the earth. The difference being that our visible universe would be bounded by the curve of the light rays coming to us, even as our earthly horizon would be bounded by the curve of the earth.

Instead of using the term "bounded universe", as some physicists do, Dr. Underwood has suggested that we call this limited realm, "man's visible domain". It seems an excellent suggestion, for as he goes on to argue, there may be countless other "visible domains", unknown each to the other, stretching into space. Similarly, it seems to the present writer, that there could be interlocking visible domains, even as two spots on the surface of the globe could have a certain mountain as a common horizon point. Such problems as this have made of the new two-hundred-inch a necessity. Man had to see what would happen when the visible horizon was again given the opportunity for expansion.*

It has been said that an astronomer can be neither an egoist nor an atheist, perhaps because no man deals so much with both the infinite, and absolute law. It is true that as a group, astronomers, even the most famous, are humble men, characterized by soft words and deep thoughts. They even seem to carry through life with them something of the peace of the star-lit heavens. They are men of perspective.

Perhaps that is why they have chosen to convene at the sight of the 100-inch on Mt. Wilson this year, when the world is wondering about Palomar. In the intervening years since the 100-inch was erected,

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the foam of increasing light about the foot of the mountain and the increasing factory smoke and suspended metallic particles from the burning dumps of the cities below the mountain, has made a useless captive of the old exploring instrument. One can almost imagine that, burdened with the weight of cosmic discovery, the spirit of the old giant has grown tired. Yet here come the astronomers to honor the instrument which first revealed the stupendousness of the infinite to the finite mind of man.

Most of these men who convened upon Mt. Wilson can remember the thrill of that moment when the horizons of the visible were exploded. Perhaps you can remember it too. If you are not that old, then perhaps you will forgive me if I tell you how the moment came to me.

As a student taking astronomy, I was surprised slightly when the professor took up the subject of star-clusters and the nebula of Orion. He had previously covered the subject completely and had gone on to other fields. I was beginning to suspect that he had forgotten his notes, and was stalling over old lectures. But then, that is when I began to detect an air of suppressed excitement in his voice. It was a moment which everyone caught even before he broke the news. Then he told us. Those fuzzy lights—those supposed nebular-clouds he had been just talking about, were not flaming gasses like the one in Orion at all. They were swarms of suns like our own Milky-Way swarm of uncounted billions. They were other universes out in space, only they were so far away that their light, speeding at 186,000 m. per second, took as much as some hundred million years to reach us! They could even have burned out in the time of the giant dinosaur, and yet for us, they would still be shining! He whispered the words.

Then mopping his brow, he closed his book with a snap making us realize how it had just become outmoded, and dismissed the class. For almost a full minute no one moved. Then one by one they began to straggle out. As I picked up my books, the title of the top one struck my reeling mind like a physical blow. It was—"Paradise Lost" by John Milton.

THE END

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FLORIDA ROCKET RANGE

IT'S NO SECRET that the U.S. is up to its ears in rocket experimentation—as is everyone else who can afford it. After all the wars of the future will be fought with the remote-controlled rocket-propelled projectile, over distances which will seem fantastic. So far most of our work has been done with the V-2's in New Mexico at White Sands, although the Navy has done some experimental stuff in the Pacific and off the coast of California. But things are growing out of hand.

For one thing, with the coming developments, long ranges are needed, ranges measured in terms of thousands of miles. The British have a huge rocket range in the vast expanses of the barren Australian desert. The Russians have gigantic tracts of Northern Siberia in which to observe and experiment.

The U.S. however can't use any place in the U.S. for its rocket work because we simply don't have the space. There are too many towns and cities scattered everywhere—a result of the U.S. expansion and the automobile.

So there is only one place left to work—and that is at sea. The Air Force is planning and will have in operation with a year, a gigantic rocket testing station in Florida, on the Banana River. The rockets will be shot out to sea. And since it doesn't make any difference where a rocket lands—it's wrecked and lost when it hits the earth as well as the sea—the only important requirement is a place where observations may be made while the rocket is in flight.

The answer to this has been found—the British Bahama Islands as well as some others, will be equipped with both optical and radar tracking instruments which will be able to follow the trajectories to their respective abilities. Thus accuracy, range, manner of flight and other qualities for given types of rockets and guided missiles may be determined without the danger of injuring anyone. It will probably be necessary to make sure that the projectiles do not pass near any shipping or aircraft lanes. Imagine the fright of the Pan-Am passengers who see a huge V-2 gracefully arcing its way toward them!

After this, there is only one way to go to find an adequate rocket range—and that's straight up! The space between the Moon and the Earth is really the last outpost of the Earth. Here the makers of guided missiles should have plenty of room. And that isn't a joke, brother. The day is coming soon! That we know.

Eventually, in the future radar stations will be set up on the Moon, not only to observe rocket flights but also to guide the missiles themselves. This is feasible in light of the powerful microwave, narrow-beam transmitters now in the process of development.

—Mo Skeeter



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REMEMBER WHEN?

WE ARE accustomed now to trans-oceanic aircraft; we take it matter-of-factly, not thinking twice about what a marvelous accomplishment it is. In a few years we'll be thinking the same way about transoceanic rocket flights and a few years after that, about trans-lunar rocket flights.

But it wasn't such a long time ago when the problem of flying the ocean was a tough one. A lot of science fictionists and a lot of engineers dreamed up the idea of a floating airfield to be stationed in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. This was to serve as a landing and refueling platform for transoceanic planes. It was a vast structure supported on pontoons and equipped with all facilities for servicing and caring for airplanes. It was—at the time—a novel idea.

It was so good, science-fictionally speaking, that several stories were written around it and a movie was made about it. "FP-one oh—" something it was called—and it was a gem in its simple way. We rather laugh at the idea. Since the construction of the super planes we have to-day no one thinks twice about such a platform. But it was recently mentioned again that it would be a good idea to have such a structure not only as a weather station but also as a rocket flight observation platform. Because the Army Air Force is planning to use the ocean as a rocket range this might not be a bad idea.

No there is another idea floating around which has been used in stories and articles too. This idea is the thought of a floating space ship located between the Earth and the Moon. This station it has been argued would serve as a take-off spot for ships going to the Moon—as a sort of way station. Well, maybe it will be built. It has a sounder technical value than a floating ocean platform.

But isn't it possible that there will be no need for such an apparatus? Suppose the engineers and scientists do come through with some sort of atomic rocket with limitless capabilities? Might that not eliminate the idea of a way station? We're inclined to think it will.

But on the other hand the space station could serve as an astronomical observatory as well. This alone might make it worthwhile. There are too many pros and cons on a matter like this to make it completely simple. Only time will give us the answer. We'll see.

However, what we're trying to point out is this: it might be an entertaining thing to look through some of the ideas of old time science fiction just to see what has come about and what hasn't. In other words, what authors were good guessers and which ones flubbed the dub on their

ideas. Judging from the way aspirant Ph.D.'s are writing these on science-fiction these days, one shouldn't be surprised if such a work is in preparation. Can you think of any failures of scientific prediction, failures which are clear cut and can be seen in terms of our own modern times of today?
—Gilbert Midas

THE OBSERVATORY

By The Editor

(Concluded From Page 5)

seductresses from the caves, of deros and Frost Giants, of the FBI and military intelligence, and the Space Police? Haven't we been captured by Plutonian Pirates and drawn and quartered by cruel Martian scientists? Haven't we eaten the deadly poisonous fruits of unknown worlds, faced the dinosaurs of the Earth's dim past, been lost in the forests that now make up our coal beds? Haven't we mined, wined and dined in all the hell holes and paradises of space? And haven't we been killed and brought to life again, been frozen in eternal ice for ages and been dug out again, been placed under suspended animation for a million years? Why we've even had our sex changed, and been made sexless. We've married the Princess of Mars, and been wedded to the Queen Bee. We've been hosts to young spiders, eaten by them as they hatched in our bodies. We've been a member of the ant world, a worker in an ant-hill. We've even been a god!

So who's afraid to step out for still another new idea? Not us—and you'll see us soon. The name is.....Ray Palmer.

THE END

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By HENRY C. ROBERTS

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